
SELECT SERMONS,

Francis Auger.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

BOSSUET,

BISHOP OF MEAUX

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A N E S S A Y

ON THE
ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT
IN ENGLAND.

By Edw.^d Birmingham Esquire.

Le choix des pensées est invention. LA BAYE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. CLARKE, NEW BOND STREET.

1800.

1540
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BOSSUET.

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A NEW ESSAY



EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE

By JOHN HENRY CARDINAL, Bishop of Meaux.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR W. CLARKE, NEW-BOND STREET.

1800.

AN
ESSAY

ON THE
ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT
IN ENGLAND.

IF terror and pity are the throbbing pulses of Christian oratory as well as of the drama, the powers of the former are certainly in this country feeble and unimpressive. Many splendid exceptions may be adduced, but I allude to the deficiency of general excellence: under that consideration, the form of Sacred Eloquence appears sickly and inactive, the pulse at her heart beats languidly, no expression flashes from her eye, and her pale lip attests that no seraph has touched it with the *live coal from off the altar*.

No other excellence can supply the want of

animation. "What have the French Revolutionists," says Mr. Burke, "to supply their innumerable defects, and to make them terrible to the firmest minds? One thing only! But that one thing is worth a thousand—they have energy."

An audience may be assimilated to a tree, that is put into motion by the passing gale: how often the voice of a Preacher passes over this tree, like a languid zephyr, without agitating a single leaf!

The beauty and propriety of our Liturgy are universally acknowledged: the learned Curate of Paddington says, in his *Elucidation*, p. 27: "The Church, in all her addresses to the Deity, has, it may almost be said, uniformly selected such titles, attributes, and perfections, as are most appropriate to the petitions to which they are prefixed, and best calculated to produce correspondent affections."

I have frequently borne a silent testimony to the strong impression the prayers of the Liturgy have made on the audience. I have frequently observed an awful expecting stillness when the Preacher has ascended the pulpit. I have observed, when every heart was broken and har-

Shepherd

rowed up by contrition, and thus incidentally prepared to receive the celestial seed from the hand of the sower, it has been defrauded of that seasonable and genial nutriment which its sensibility required. A cold inanimated discourse (through which Reason drags her long chain of argument) succeeds to the glowing orisons of the Liturgy: or if the discourse takes another direction, and assumes something of an animated form, yet then that form is powerless; it bears the semblance of merit without the effect, and stands in the order of oratorical excellence, as the snow-drop in the class of flowers, which appears,

"As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
Had chang'd an icicle into a flower;
Its name and hue the scentless plant retains,
And winter lingers in its icy veins."

See Mrs. Barbauld's Poems.

That languor which adheres to sacred oratory, does not arise from the absence of abilities. Literature is under the highest obligation to the actual labours of the English Clergy. Biblical Investigation is unweariedly urging her sublime pursuit. The hallowed shield of Truth is invincibly held up against the arm of

Infidelity; and productions of every kind are continually promoting the cause of Morality. The many single sermons or discourses collected into a volume, which are daily issuing from the press, though not glowing with that characteristic energy required from a Christian orator, contain a considerable portion of sacred learning elegantly displayed; so that the clerical mind may be said, with the strictest propriety, to be highly cultivated, and usefully exerted.

As I wish to address this discourse to the younger part of the Clergy, I should advise them not to adhere to the present adopted mode of preaching. *Pectus est quod desertos facit.* They should dive into the recesses of their own bosom, and explore the latent energy of soul, form an acquaintance with their own peculiar powers, and mark the bent and tendency of their rising talents. "Knowledge," says Cudworth, in his Treatise on immutable Morality, "is not to be poured into the soul like liquor, but rather to be invited and gently drawn forth from it; nor the mind so much to be filled therewith from without like a vessel, as to be kindled and awakened. Hence is that strange parturiency, that is often observed in the mind,

when it is solicitously set upon the investigation of some truth, whereby it doth endeavour, by ruminating and revolving within itself; as it were, to conceive it within itself, to bring it forth out of its own womb; by which it is evident that the mind is naturally conscious of its own active fecundity."

It is said, that, when Shakespeare was born, Nature destroyed the mould in which his great mind was formed. Without losing sight of those splendid exceptions to which I before alluded, I cannot help wishing that some superior genius would break the general mould in which religious discourses are cast. To borrow an illustration from sculpture, an English sermon may be said to be compared to the statue of a correct but unimpassioned artist: the form displays an apt proportion of parts; but no soul warms, awakens, inspirits the dead marble. The subject of an English sermon is often admirably well conducted, and ingeniously expanded; the formation is accurate, but something is still wanting: I cannot better elucidate my meaning, than by these lines from Dryden:

Still the warm sun its cheering power withheld,
Nor added colours to the world reveal'd.

I beg I may not be understood, that I am recommending to the Preacher to effuse a gaudy colouring over his composition. The celestial form of Religion does not require the flowing robe of Ostentation, nor is it to be viewed as through a prism. A Christian audience is not to be amused with the tricks of oratory, nor is the spiritual food which the audience demands at the hands of their pastors to be supplied with the flowers of rhetoric. The pastors, says Bishop Taylor (in his sermon on the Duty of Ministers) "are not to feed the people with gay tulips and useless daffodils, but with the bread of life, and medicinal plants, springing from the margin of the Fountain of Salvation."

I shall reserve for another opportunity some observations on the sermons that have appeared in the course of the last ten years; in which I have attempted to show, that, however many of them may be esteemed beautiful moral essays, they are devoid of that evangelic and pastoral *unction*, which the pulpit demands: that they are not calculated to reach the affections, nor, in correspondence with the object in view, either to disturb, terrify, soften, encourage, or

console. They contain no communicative sensibility, and have nothing that is glowing, seraphic, or incentive. If any authority were requisite to corroborate my opinion on this subject, I find the sentiments of Bishop Warburton in perfect consonance with mine: in his *Directions for the Study of Theology*, he has these words: "A pathetic address to the passions and affections of penitent hearers, perhaps the most operative of all the various species of instruction, is that in which the English pulpit is most defective."

It would be an invidious task to draw a comparison between the regal state of Christian oratory at the commencement of the fourth century, and its meagre, impoverished existence in the present day. Gregory Nazianzen, in his celebrated valedictory sermon, relates incidentally, rather than designedly, the triumphs of his own eloquence, which eloquence, however, was not peculiar to him; but displayed the general character of oratory at that period. The venerable Prelate having obtained permission to resign his see, ascended the pulpit for the last time, and took his leave of his audience in expressions flowing from an exuberant sensibility:

“Thou great and august temple, farewell! Farewell Apostles, ye leaders of my conflicts and my sufferings: thou dangerous and envied pre-eminence, episcopal throne, farewell!—Farewell, ye widows and orphans! Eyes of the poor, invariably directed to the preacher, farewell! Ye innumerable frequenters of my homilies! ye swift-handed notaries! ye rails pressed by my greedy auditors! farewell, farewell!”

The apostrophe the abdicating orator addresses to the busy notaries, to the eyes of the poor, to the rails that were pressed by the innumerable throng, and the expression of the *greedy auditors*; demonstratively ascertain the brilliant powers of eloquence, when they were exercised by a Gregory Nazianzen, a Basil, or a Chrysostom.

Preaching is the most noble employment of reason. When our great epic poet extols the excellence of his divine art, he assimilates her to sacred eloquence:—“Poetic abilities,” he says, “are of power, *besides the office of the pulpit*, to inbreed and cherish in a great people, the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, to set the affections

in right tune, and to celebrate, in glorious and lofty hymns, the throne and equipage of God's Almightyness*."

Impressed with the dignity of his office, the young Preacher should bring to his task a bosom penetrated with the awful truth he is going to unfold: it is the best method of deepening the effect upon an audience. Crasnow says, in his quaint, but expressive manner, *the wounded is the wounding heart.*

We read in the history of the Roman Drama, that Polus, a celebrated actor, relinquished the stage for a considerable time, from the melancholy occurrence of losing an only child. Being at length persuaded to resume his profession, in order to engrave still deeper on his soul the tragic scene of Electra, which he was called upon to exhibit, he hurried to the tomb of his beloved son, and with an holy violation bore away the urn that enclosed the endeared ashes: and when he held up this real object of domestic affliction for the urn of Orestes, he was so vehemently affected, that nature broke out into tones the most impassioned, and the most ex-

* See that valuable work, the Life of Milton, by Mr. Hayley; from whence this extract is taken.

pressive of grief, while the whole theatre felt a correspondent emotion, and echoed the moans of the sorrow-wounded parent.

The Minister of the Gospel has no occasion to have recourse to such stimulatives; the objects of his discussion press equally upon him as upon his audience. Eternity! heaven! hell! death! these are themes which cast around an awful and universal interest. The Preacher may be compared in some respect to the pilot in a storm, who shares the peril with the passengers. The parliamentary orator delivers his sentiments with animating warmth, under the conviction that he is pleading the sacred cause of his country; and can the advocate, pleading the cause of eternity, the celestial patriot, perform his awful task with apathy?

Let the young Ecclesiastic, while he stands on the threshold of the sanctuary, undergo a self-examination: if the silent, but heart-felt invitation, if the lonely whispering voice of predilection, do not prompt him to ascend the seat of the preacher; if an enthusiastic ardour does not elevate him when he is commenting upon the sacred text; if he carries to his holy

task, a supine reluctance; he may rest assured, that eloquent Nature has not predestined him to occupy a place among the small number of her elect; that she has not kindled for him the sacred flame; and that to him these words of Danté may be applied :

A cui natura,

Non scaldo ferro mai, ne batte ancude.

But, if the clerical student is conscious that Nature has imprinted on his mind a peculiar bias; if, amidst the claims of active life, she urges his power to one peculiar aim; if, deeply affected with the beauties of profane eloquence, he glows with an enthusiasm till then unknown at the energy of sacred oratory; if an emulative fire kindles in his breast at the recollection of our church-worthies, the spiritual founders, and the successive propagators of the establishment, those immoveable columns, which upheld amidst the bursting tempest the sacred roof! if, stealing from the haunts of man, he invokes the Holy Spirit to descend from above, exuberant of grace, and rich in his sevenfold energy; if the sacred fountain of tears lodged in the recesses of the soul, is ready, at Nature's call, to overflow with affectionate effusion :

these indications testify that he is designated by Religion to the office of the sublimest import, the dispensation of her holy word. As the fire from Heaven, which in Leviticus consumed the burnt-offering, and which was ever after preserved from extinction by the means of common materials; so the flame of genius, which descends from Heaven to the human breast, must be kept alive by human assiduity: it must be fed from the treasury of learning, and enriched by the deductions of an observing mind. But the Preacher must not be fastidiously solicitous, or elaborately nice in the arrangement of periods, and in the marshalling of his words. Milton, the great master of expression, says, " True eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others: when such a man would speak, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

The Christian Orator must direct a peculiar

attention to the Bible: St. Jerome, no incompetent judge of this subject, recommends to the priesthood the perusal of the sacred page in these energetic words:—" *Tenentem sacros codices somnus obrepat, et cadentem faciem pagina sancta suscipiat.*"

The Scripture is the heaven, from which the preacher is to steal the Promethean heat which is to animate his composition. The Scripture is the herbal, or rather the storehouse of plants and flowers, from whence the spiritual physician gathers the medical herbs of power to soothe the diseased mind, and disperse that perilous stuff that weighs upon the guilty breast: The Scripture is the arsenal from which are drawn those dread materials that form the thunder which the Prophets, the primitive preachers, wielded over an unrepenting world.

The many texts which will present themselves to the biblical student as candidates for his choice, should be previously examined before he makes his selection. He should soar on the wings of contemplation, and hover over the sacred ground, till, discovering a text that forcibly

attracts him, he should seize it, as the descending eagle rushes on his prey.

"The subject of the discourse," says Dr. Langhorn, "may sometimes preach more effectually than the discourse itself: arising either from the energy and brevity of the expression, or from adapting it with an obvious propriety to some temporary occasion. When the fate of Aaron's two sons was pronounced, the sacred writer gives us this short and striking description: *Aaron held his peace*. What expression! Would not this be a most proper text for the subject of religious resignation? And would not the text itself plead more emphatically than the most laboured sermon *?"

If history (as it has been asserted) is philosophy realized, historical preaching is truth exemplified. What are words to things? What was the harangue of Anthony to his producing the body of Cæsar? Now a story realizes a discourse, and brings, as it were, the body of Cæsar to our view.

In St. James's Church, on the seventh of last month, I heard a subject of this nature

* See a little tract, entitled, *Letters on the Eloquence of the Pulpit*.

treated in the most luminous and happy manner: the subject of the historic discourse was the decapitation of St. John the Baptist. The eloquent Prelate drew with a masterly hand, the characters of all the personages concerned in that drama. The glowing zeal and undaunted courage of the Baptist, the vindictive spirit that reigned in the bosom of Herodias, were displayed in the most striking point of view. In the delineation of the character of the young woman, compassion softened the strain of the Orator; the timid nature of the daughter was vividly contrasted with the imperious command of the mother, and with a lenient hand he flung over the part the daughter acted in this tragedy, the veil of filial obedience. But on Herod, the sacred Orator poured the full torrent of his indignant zeal, and pointed out, in the most convincing, energetic language, that his adulterous intercourse with Herodias was the cause, at first imperceptible, that led him from step to step to the completion of the crime of murder. He then noticed the frequency of divorces, which indicated an alarming dissolution of manners, and which he awfully represented as sufficient to

awaken the divine forbearance, and call down the vengeance of Heaven on this country.

There are many stories in the sacred writings, pregnant with the most interesting morality. There are also to be found in ecclesiastical history, subjects that might be adopted by the Christian Orator. The story of the forty Martyrs of Sebasté occurs to me as a subject that would happily illustrate a discourse that treated upon the necessity of perseverance: the unexpected desertion of one of the holy band, if properly commented upon, would exhibit a terrifying example. I beg leave to recommend this subject to the Morning Preacher at Spring-garden Chapel, a gentleman who possesses superior talents for the pulpit.

These illustrious soldiers suffered for their faith in the Lesser Armenia, under the Emperor Lucinus, in 320: they belonged to the same company, and were enlisted into the Thundering Legion: Agricola, the governor of the province, having published an order directing the army to sacrifice to the Pagan deities, forty Christian soldiers represented their peculiar situation, and refused to join their comrades in the act of sacrifice: this refusal irritated the go-

vernor, to whose menaces they returned this heroic answer:—that his power did not extend to their will, it only extended to the infliction of corporal pain, which they had learned to despise when they became soldiers. The governor, highly incensed at their courage, devised an extraordinary kind of death. Under the walls of the town was a river, which was frozen. Agricola ordered the protesting soldiers to be exposed naked on the ice: a warm bath was prepared at a small distance for any who should relent. They readily consented to undergo the severe trial; and having for a considerable time endured the thrilling agony of the freezing air, one unhappy sufferer relented. While the gates of heaven were just opening to his view, while the hands of angels were preparing his crown of victory, and saints expected his ascending spirit, the wretched apostate rose from his icy couch, crawled to the seductive bath, and stooping into the warm emollient water, expired.

Besides the method of conveying instruction through the channel of history, there are circumstances seemingly unimportant, which, if seized with address, will suggest to the Preacher

a new and unexpected train of ideas. A Preacher some years ago, in France, who had acquired a considerable share of renown among the villagers at a great distance from the capital, came to Paris on some private business, without any intention of displaying his oratorical talents; but so great was the curiosity of the Parisians to hear the rustic orator, that importunities poured in upon him from every quarter. He was at length prevailed upon to comply with the universal request. The church of St. Sulpitius was chosen for the purpose. The parish of St. Sulpitius is one of the most extensive in Paris, and was inhabited chiefly by persons of the highest distinction and eminence. Never did a more splendid audience present itself to the eye of a Preacher. The Abbé Bridaine found himself encircled with bishops, cardinals, princes, ministers, united with all the female elegance of Paris. Surprised, but not intimidated, he seized the local incident arising from the contrast of the actual to his own accustomed audience, to usher in the following impressive exordium:

“ Disused to so brilliant a congregation, I ought to entreat your indulgence towards a

poor country curate, who is destitute of those elegant talents which the Parisians require of the Minister of the Gospel. I am, however, conscious of a very different sensation than that of fear ; and if I feel myself impressed at this moment with humility, do not imagine that it arises from the wretched disquietude of vanity. God forbid that a Minister of his Gospel should stand in need of an apology when he comes before you to dispense the words of life. Although you may boast of ever so exalted a rank, you are not greater in the eye of Heaven than I am ; and every person in this audience is what I am, a sinner. It has been till this day my lot to announce the word of God in churches whose thatched roofs canopy an humble train. Wretch that I am ! I have urged the rigours of penance to those who had not bread to offer to their famished children. I have enforced the most tremendous truths of our religion upon the innocent inhabitant of the cottage. I have carried dismay and affliction into the bosom of those whom I should rather have pitied and consoled. From the place I now occupy, wherever I direct my eyes, I behold only the rich, the great, the

fortunate ; perhaps I behold the oppressors of suffering humanity ; at least, I may with truth affirm, that I behold audacious and habitual sinners ! Ah, it is here the impassioned Preacher may roll the thunder of the Gospel ! It is here, as through a bursting cloud, he may pour the tempest of his indignation.—

“ The certainty of death, the uncertainty of the hour, the small number of the elect, the last judgment, hell, and, above all, eternity ! eternity ! these are the subjects I shall this day unfold to your trembling view, and which I now lament I had not reserved for you alone. I do not court your applause ; for the applause given to the Preacher does not ensure the salvation of the hearer. May God touch your hardened hearts ! I have acquired a long experience of his mercy, and should remorse harrow up your soul, you will then acknowledge that I am sufficiently eloquent.”

A *local occurrence* will sometimes claim the notice of a Christian orator. Dr. Langhorn inserted in a poem, entitled, *The Country Justice*, an event which had happened in his neighbourhood. He had foreseen the effect it would have on the poetical reader by the warm in-

terest it obtained among his rural auditors when he delivered the pathetic story from the pulpit. It is a tragical incident belonging to the simple annals of the village; and although it carries with it a collateral rather than a direct moral tendency, the feeling Pastor was induced to weave it into his discourse for the purpose of exciting a resentment at the unmerciful dispensation of power which is sometimes exercised by churchwardens. The narrative, divested of its poetical ornaments, yet retaining all its interest, runs thus:—An indigent and virtuous young married woman, who lived at a considerable distance from her own parish, was returning home: she had passed through the toil of a long day's journey on foot, and in the evening reached a village that was three miles distant from her own. Exhausted with fatigue, and fainting with thirst, she trusted that some charitable person would allow her a little straw upon which she might repose her weary limbs, and she begged for a cup of beer to moisten her parched lips. That boon, indeed, was not denied her; but the stern overseer, perceiving the advanced state of her pregnancy, hurried her away from the village,

without permitting her to partake of any refreshment; and having conducted her beyond the limits of the parish, he inhumanly left her on a naked heath. The pangs of child-birth soon assailed her; she was delivered of her infant, and expired. At that moment a highwayman, who had just committed a robbery, was hastening over the heath, and riding close to the very spot, he saw a woman who appeared dead, with a naked babe at her bosom; forgetting his own perilous situation, the generous robber alighted from his horse, carried the naked infant to a cottage, and distributed part of his booty to the woman who received the child. Every heart must throb with a wish for the humane robber's escape; but Heaven ordained it otherwise: the pity that delayed his flight was the cause of his being taken. The singularity of his case not being accurately conveyed to the merciful ear of the king, he underwent the full rigour of his sentence; while the unrelenting overseer still presides in his hamlet, the terror of the poor! and bears, to use the closing words of the poem,

Weekly to church his book of wicked prayers.

There are situations of danger and alarm that will call forth the most powerful exertions of the Orator. James Saurin, the celebrated Preacher at the Hague, introduced into his discourse the state of the exiled Protestants in the most bold and original manner. The sermon was preached at the opening of the campaign 1706, on the fast-day. The annals of religion never, perhaps, presented to the view of a Christian orator a more interesting scene. The promiscuous crowd that thronged the church, was composed of the army, and of their nearest connexions and relations, for whose safety they were going to expose their lives. No sinister views, no thoughts of aggrandizement, no commercial advantages, mingled with the purity of that contest in which they were engaged: nature, security, domestic happiness, called them to the strife, while Religion stood on the pedestal of Ambition.

The Preacher took his text from the sixth chapter of the prophet Micah:

“ ‘ Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord’s contro-
 ‘ verfy, and ye strong foundations of the
 ‘ earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with

‘ his people, and he will plead with Israel.

‘ O my people, what have I done unto thee,

‘ testify against me.’

“ This astonishing scenic representation, my brethren, of the Creator entering into a contending dialogue with the creature, is what I shall this day hold up to your view, in order that you may enter into those sentiments of compunction which the solemnity of this day requires. The arm of God is extended over our heads! shall I say for the purpose of defence or of destruction? Oh! let me conjure you, by the walls of this temple which still subsist, by the charm of conjugal affection, by the love you bear your children, by the unshaken fidelity you owe to your religion, in the name of our sovereigns, our commanders, our soldiers; by all these sacred titles to your attention, may my voice this day have access to the inmost recesses of your hearts. Ye worldly distractions! ye terrestrial cares! ye birds, ye harpies that disturb our sacrifice, vanish from our mind this day, and leave us with God alone.

“ ‘ Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord’s
‘ controversy, and ye strong foundations of

‘ the earth ; for the Lord hath a controversy
 ‘ with his people, and he will plead with
 ‘ Israel.’

“ As I consider this text as immediately connected with your present unfortunate situation, you may be allowed to pour out your complaints, and proclaim before the face of heaven and earth the calamities with which you are afflicted.

“ ‘ O my people, what have I done unto
 ‘ thee?’

“ Lord, thou hast done many things unto us ! Ye solitary paths that lead to the gates of Jerusalem ! ye dejected sacrificers ! ye weeping virgins ! ye sanctuaries levelled with the dust ! deserts peopled with holy fugitives ! members of Jesus Christ wandering upon the face of the earth ! ye children torn from the arms of your parents ! imprisoning caverns gorged with confessors ! forms of deceased martyrs denied the asylum of the grave, and exposed to the mangling talons of voracious birds ! ye fallen temples ! dust ! ashes ! sacred ruins ! ye flames ! ye torturing wheels ! and scaffolds ! oh reply, and bear your testimony against the Eternal.

“ But, if we take God for our judge, shall we not find motives sufficient to justify the calamities with which we are now afflicted? The habitual contempt of his word, the abortive warning of his pastors, an inordinate attachment to the world, the many vices that preceded the misfortunes we now lament, should make us smite our bosom, and cry out, in the words of the prophet, The Eternal is just, for we have rebelled against him.”

Ecclesiastical history informs us of a most happy local incident, of which the great Chrysostom failed not to avail himself. Eutropius, a man of the lowest extraction, had, by the means of a smooth insinuating manner, gained an ascendant over the mind of the Emperor Arcadius, who having previously raised him to offices of emolument and power, had elevated him to the dignity of consul. Invested with authority, he oppressed the people, and persecuted the church. Among the several rigorous laws and provocations that emanated from his administration, the edict that suppressed the privilege of sanctuary gave considerable offence. The undaunted Chrysostom stood forth upon all occasions to oppose the

innovating spirit of the minister. At length the people, uniting with the army, loudly demanded his dismissal. The emperor, who had already expressed his indignation at his conduct, ordered him to retire from court, with an injunction never to return. Abandoned by the emperor, and exposed to public resentment, the wretched Eutropius fled to the altar for that privilege he had denied to others. The emperor sent a detachment of his guards to force him from his asylum. But the generous interposition of Chrysostom prevailed upon the commanding officer to suspend his orders till he obtained leave from the emperor for Eutropius to partake of the privilege of sanctuary. The next day being a great festival, an unusual concourse of people thronged to the church to behold that person reduced to so humiliating a state, whose deportment in the hour of prosperity had been haughty, imperious, and oppressive. The tumultuous noise which first prevailed having subsided into an awful silence, Chrysostom pronounced the following discourse:

“ ‘ Vanity of vanities ; and all is vanity.’ ”

“ If ever there was a time more adapted

than another for the application of these emphatic words, it is most assuredly the present moment. Where is the splendour that environed the consul? where are the honours, where are the Imperial distinctions that attended him? are the festive hours of his repasts to return no more? are the days of his rejoicing departed? where are his choristers? where are his musicians? Has a mournful silence succeeded to the applause of the circus? to the loud acclamations of innumerable spectators? A sudden blast has withered the lofty tree, despoiled it of all its leaves and flowing honours, and palsied the naked branches. Where is now your late concourse of summer friends? where is the lengthening procession of your parasites? The felicity you enjoyed has passed away as the dream that vanishes at the dawn of day: it has passed away like the beauty of the vernal flower; it has passed away like an airy vapour before the sun; it has passed away like a cloud of dust that is scattered by the wind. ‘Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity!’ These emphatic words should be proclaimed in all public places; they should be inscribed upon the walls of every

mansion; they should be imprinted on our garments; but they should be principally engraved upon our hearts.

“ How repeatedly have I said to you, Eutropius, that riches are fugitive slaves: experience now informs you that they are homicides, since they are the authors of that impending danger which threatens your existence. And to avoid being involved in the same calamity, your parasite companions and adulators, and they who experienced the beneficial part of your power, behold! they have all abandoned you; while we observe a conduct of a different tendency: we who, in the day of your prosperity, patiently endured the pressure of your tyranny, in the day of your misfortune protect you with all our authority. The holy religion you have insulted and oppressed offers you an asylum, receives you into her arms, and holds you to her bosom. I do not use this language by way of exulting over the enemy, who is grovelling in the dust, but to strengthen those who stand; not to inflame the wound that now is bleeding, but to stimulate the attention of those who have yet received no wound; not to plunge

into the roaring waves the man who is shipwrecked, but to instruct those who sail with prosperous winds to escape from being exposed to the same calamity.

“ There is little occasion for the parade of words, when the presence of the disgraced fugitive so forcibly describes his misfortune. Most of you assisted yesterday at the strange spectacle exhibited in this temple; you beheld, when the Imperial guards came to arrest the fallen minister, how eagerly he flew to yon sanctuary, and embraced the sacred vases! a deathlike paleness was diffused over his countenance, a chilling terror convulsed his frame; his voice burst out at intervals into broken accents, I say not this for the purpose of adding to the mass of his misfortune, but to quicken your sensibility, and induce your compassion to entertain the benevolent idea, that his punishment has already transcended his crime. Is there any person present who inwardly reproaches me for holding out a protecting hand to that unhappy criminal? Does it appear inconsistent, that he should find security in that temple, whose sacred worship he was ambitious to annihilate? Rather think with me, that it

redounds to the glory of God, that so formidable an enemy should be compelled to acknowledge the power and the forbearance of the Church! This venerable matron, like a tender mother, covers him with her garment from the indignation of the emperor, and the vehemence of public hatred. A clemency of this distinguished nature reflects an additional lustre on that blazing altar. To these eyes never did yon altar appear more resplendent or more tremendous than at this moment, when I behold that lion trembling at its feet."

The evangelic monitor should be diligently observant of the living manners, in order to subdue the springing folly, and rising vice, while they flutter on feeble pinions. I was present two years ago at a sermon, into which the Preacher introduced a circumstance which had at that time excited much conversation: the subject of the discourse was Death, at the close of which he joined the public complaint against those wretches whose practice was (for a sordid interest) to violate the repose of the dead; who, like the wolves in winter, tear from the graves the mangled corpses. I recol-

lest the discourse concluded with words to this effect:

“Let the remains of the murderer or the notorious offender be consigned to the anatomist, but, in the name of God and of nature, let the tombs of the innocent be still respected. When resignation has somewhat assuaged and bound up the wound of the survivor for some dear relative, these monsters rend the bands asunder, and inflict a new agony on the gaping wound.”

There is a theme which would call for the exertions of the Christian Orator, were it not become an object of parliamentary discussion—Indian slavery! who still pants for the day of her emancipation, and who boasts of having attracted to her cause the most generous, unwearied, and eloquent advocate, who makes his annual appeal to his country, and calls upon Compassion to pay her long arrears.

With regard to points of religious controversy, they should be cautiously admitted into public discourses: Asperity is apt to insinuate her serpentine form into the subject, and stain the purity of evangelic forbearance. Contro-

verfly, like a rapid wheel, sets itself on fire in its course, and by that means does not attain the object of its pursuit. Let the controvertist exert his abilities in his cabinet, and not in the pulpit. The controversial Preacher appears, in some degree, as the violator of the laws of religious freedom. Christianity, of whatever denomination, is like the sacred vessel sailing to Delphos, which was at all times unmolested.

But against the progress of modern scepticism occasional exertion may be made with salutary effect. Against that German monster Infidelity, which (to use the words that Gildas applied to the Arian heresy), like a fierce serpent, is continually vomiting forth her *transformine* poison upon us! against that growing monster let our most strenuous exertions be directed; and, to adopt a once celebrated expression, to a better purpose, let us not be *germanised* to stone.

Subjects of animadversion will sometimes present themselves from the Clergyman's peculiar place of residence. They who dwell in the vicinity of the sea-coast, will have occasion to exert their influence to suppress that inhuman

treatment which the unfortunate persons who are shipwrecked not unfrequently receive from the hands of their own countrymen. It would be too painful to relate the several depredatory and atrocious acts that have been committed during the present war; the intelligence of which has come to my knowledge from indisputable authority. The recurrence of these inhuman practices would almost prompt one to think, that the nation, whose heart glows with benevolence, is palsied at the extremities.

Wherever the Pastor is stationed, it becomes his duty to mark what passes around him; to observe the varying and Protean shape that vice assumes: he must bear in his recollection that he is the person to whom these words may be applied; "let him declare what he seeth." *Isaiah, chap. xxi. ver. 6.*

These observations, that an honest zeal has induced me to offer to the attention of the juvenile Ecclesiastics, will, I trust, be of some utility to them in the administration of their professional duty. If they woo Religion for Religion's sake, and stand at her altar enamoured of the form of Truth, much may be done by their patriotic exertions, for such they

may be denominated with the strictest propriety. The times are truly awful, and demand the unwearied vigilance of the priesthood. "Let him declare what he seeth;" let the voice of the monitor be heard; let it enforce this truth so little attended to, that the prevailing lukewarm attachment to virtue is little better than habitual vice: "Let him declare what he seeth." If the torrent of modern dissipation still urges on its impetuous course, bearing away with its rapidity all recollection, all economy (the treasury of charity), all good resolutions, health, and improving leisure; if the languid lamp of devotion should be totally extinguished, may we not expect some domestic calamity, some English misfortune? It is, perhaps, in the power of the Clergy to avert the impending destruction. Let the young Ecclesiastic awfully behold the sublime task that is assigned him; let him look up with rapturous hope to his great reward. The retrospective view on his past endeavours will administer to him (on some future day) that pure, serene delight, which the world, with all its treasury of happiness, has not to bestow. He will feel (at the close of life) a glowing

confidence, that as our nature at the Ascension was triumphantly translated into heaven, he will ascend the same glorious height, and partake of the triumph of the great Preacher, Jesus! who has promised that they shall be clothed with a star-like brilliancy, who shall have illumined others in their road to eternity.

I beg leave, before I conclude this Essay, to advert to the small encouragement that is given to sacred eloquence. The many charitable institutions in this town, whose turrets pierce the skies, and, as Mr. Burke observes, "like so many electrical conductors avert the wrath of Heaven, do honour to general benevolence." These charitable institutions, however, hold out no allurements to clerical talents. The trifling stipend offered to the morning or evening Preacher is not sufficiently attractive to a young man of genius to make him forego other literary pursuits, to devote himself entirely to this hallowed art, without which excellence is not to be attained, and, like the plighted virgin, leave behind all other endearing connexions to adhere to the object of her choice. The governors of the charitable institutions may say, they offer to the Preacher as much as

they can deduct from their other various demands: to this supposed assertion of the governors, if I am not competent to reply, I may be allowed to observe, that if young men of distinguished abilities were incited by a more liberal remuneration, the audience would be more numerous, more splendid, and the collection more productive. We have all heard of the surprising and repeated collections made in a neighbouring island by the means of sacred eloquence. Genius shrinks (like the sensitive plant) uninvited by patronage, unexcited, unrewarded,

“ Nor trusts its blossoms to the churlish skies.”

As the embosomed seed springs not from the earth unless warm suns and genial showers call it forth, so the parturient mind yields not the expected produce unless equal justice

“ Scatters with a free, though frugal hand,
Light golden show'rs of plenty o'er the land.”

Encouragement is the test of genius; it acts upon it as provocation operates upon an irri-

table mind. Genius is fostered at the bar, and there we behold it triumphant. In musical composition we behold the reverse : although the *light golden showers* are not wanting to the genial climate of the stage, none of our musical dramas discover any original merit : the barren, uninventive compiler only does the honours of foreign composers ; I am therefore compelled to think, that vocal and instrumental compositions are repugnant to English genius. But of the more important and more exalted art (whose cause I am now pleading) I entertain a very different sentiment. From many indications that appear on the surface, I indulge the pleasing idea, that the quarry contains an invaluable treasure. The new Royal Institute proclaims the liberality of modern patronage : why might not a fund be established for the purpose of awakening an emulative disposition in the rising race of Preachers, and of calling forth dormant and inactive capacities ? Several persons of the most enlightened discernment with whom I have conversed upon this subject, concur with me in thinking, that an endowment of the nature I am suggesting

would be productive of the most salutary and early effects : Sacred Eloquence would assume the honours to which she would then be entitled, and take the lead in the procession of talents.

April the 9th, 1800.



It is a great pleasure to hear of your success in the
study of the French language, and I am sure you will
soon be able to read and write it with ease.

The account you give of your journey to the
North and back is very interesting, and I am
glad to hear you had a successful one.

I am sure you will find the French language
very useful in your travels, and I am sure
you will be able to read and write it with ease.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

If the clerical student should not find in the following Sermons a perfect model for composition, he will receive a mind fermented by genius pressed on the attention; differing dig-

THE favourable reception, which Bossuet's Funeral Orations have met with from the public, has induced the Translator to adopt the same free and unrestrained manner in the present attempt; and which might perhaps be denominated an abridgment, rather than a translation: it is, however, an abridgment, that retains the principal beauties of each Discourse, without disturbing the harmony of connexion.

The many local and incidental passages arising from the peculiar habits, the popular opinions, and religious persuasion of France, so well understood and felt by the audience

before which these Discourses were delivered, would pall upon the English reader, and depress that interest the Translator has endeavoured to excite.

If the clerical student should not find in the following Sermons a perfect model for composition, he will see how a mind fermented by genius presses on the attention; diffusing dignity round inferior objects, shedding fecundity on sterile materials, bodying forth aerial substances, animating common topics, infusing into reproaches a severe delight, alarming the confident, appalling the guilty, casting the splendour of conviction over what is obscure, and *breathing a browner horror upon what is terrific.*

without disturbing the harmony of connexion. The many local and incidental passages arising from the popular habits, the popular opinions, and religious superstitions of France, to well understood and felt by the audience.



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From the First Volume of Bossuet, p. 206.

SERMON II.

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SERMON III.

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SERMON IV.

From the Fifth Volume, p. 37.

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

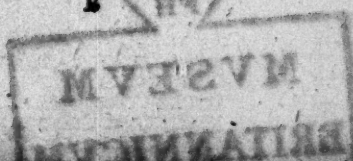
Preached on the first Sunday of Advent, before the King.

THE NEGLECT OF SALVATION.

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.

Rom. chap. xiii. v. ii.

SHOULD I obtain belief, were I to say that the whole human race is plunged in a profound sleep; that, even amidst the agitation of this splendid court, the greater number are oppressed with an inward lethargy? It is however an immutable truth, that he only is awake who is mindful of that great concern, his salvation. How many of this audience are unfortunately diseased with this somnolent affection! and who perhaps will not be excited at the alarming object of this discourse!



Let me direct your attention for one moment to nature's great concluding scene ! when, at the terrific solemnity of the descending God, astonished nature will be convulsed, and a destructive sound will be heard, announcing the ruin of the world. May the terrible Judge whose menaces I this day proclaim, endow my words with an energy powerful enough to rouse the inattentive sinner, to break the bands of his lethargy asunder, and alarm him into contrition !

It is an uncontested point, which the sacred writings establish, and which experience justifies, that the origin of all our crimes, and of all our misfortunes, is, the want of reflection. If sometimes the virtuous man, in the repose of calm of his passions, inadvertently forsakes the helm, and is lost ; how diligent, how active the sinner should be in repairing the shipwreck of his conscience ! There is not a precept, which the Son of God so often repeats and enforces as that which bids us watch and pray. The epistles, the gospels, every page of the New Testament, cry out to us to be on our guard against the unknown hour.

Whence is it that man, who is so alive to his



own interest, so actively attentive to his own concerns, should turn away from an object of such tremendous importance, as God ! and his justice ! When I have endeavoured to trace the origin of this infatuation, and dive into the profound cause of this insensibility, this observation has occurred. The human mind being closed within the narrow circle of its own orbit, feels nothing strongly but what acts within that circle : and the present disposition, whatever it may be, throws its own colouring on the surrounding objects. The choleric man, when he is under the influence of excessive passion, thinks every person participates of his resentment. The man whose eyelids are oppressed with slumber, thinks the world is at rest around him. A similar delusion actuates the sinner, who, while he feels the languor of indifference, is apt to imagine that the divine justice partakes of the same languor. But this is an error pregnant with most fatal consequences. Let not the silence of God be misconstrued into an approbation, his patience perverted to a pardon, and his forbearance assimilated to an oblivion. God is patient, because he is merciful ; and, if his offer of mercy be rejected, he still is patient,

because vengeance is in his power. They must act precipitately, who depend on the rapidity of the occasion. But Omnipotence, who, from the centre of his own eternity, sends forth the train of ages, while time, throughout its progress, is under his dominion; that awful Being acts not with precipitation.

I have now to unfold a less obvious truth; I wish to impress you with the idea, that the quiet, the serenity of mind which attends the habitual sinner, is inflicted on him as a punishment: behold a new mode of vengeance which the Deity assumes to himself. The sinner, delighted at the unrestrained course of his prosperity, imagines he has nothing to apprehend; from whence arises that fatal supineness, that sleep of death, of which I have spoken. This state of mind is the greatest of misfortunes, because it borders on the precipice of final impenitence and irremediable destruction. The prophet Isaiah represents this misfortune under the figure of a cup, which he calls the cup of the wrath of God. The intoxicating liquor, means their crimes, and their licentious desires: they taste the poisonous potion, and the ascending vapours darken the lustre of reflection: by

which means the soul dimly sees, through an intervening cloud, the truths of religion, and the terrible judgments of God. They deplore, however, their weakness; they cast a look of regret on the virtue they have abandoned, their conscience awakes, and says, as it heaves a sigh from the heart, Oh piety! oh chastity! oh innocence! oh sanctity of baptism! But sensuality soon prevails over the suggestions of conscience: they taste again the inebriating cup, their mental powers decrease, the light of reason dies away, and darkness reigns: nevertheless, amidst this incumbent night, a glimmering ray sometimes is seen, some feeble recollection of a God will arise amidst this general forgetfulness. They once more apply their lips to the fatal cup, and behold the pernicious effects, as they are displayed by the prophet: "Thy sons have fainted, they lay at the head of all the streets." (Isaiah, chap. li. v. 20.) This is an image of sinners, who having intoxicated themselves at the chalice of human delight, lose all knowledge of God, and all consciousness of their own situation: they sin without remorse, they remember their crimes without sorrow, they repent without contrition, they relapse without fear, they per-

severe without disquietude, and at length die without repentance.

Behold, oh thoughtless men ! your alarming state. While you are indulging your inordinate desires, you are drinking a long oblivion of your Creator ; at the same time, there is collecting against you in the bosom of God, a mass of hatred. “ Thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath.” (Rom. chap. ii. v. 5.) That wrath will one day burst upon your head, and you will be awakened by its explosion, only for the purpose of receiving your sentence. Hasten then from the wrath to come, and may my voice be the warning sound to alarm you into reflection !

Jesus Christ commands the ministers of the gospel to announce to his people the danger of delay. I will therefore plead the cause of this important truth, in the words of the parable : “ Watch, therefore ; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up ; therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as

ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. And if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This parable reveals to us, not only that the intent of our Saviour is to surprise us with an unexpected arrival, but it also reveals to us, that the only method of avoiding this calamity, is to be upon our guard, and to watch without ceasing. Such is the counsel of God: such is the wise economy which the universal Father has established in his family. It is his sacred will, that his servants should be vigilant, and perpe-

tually attentive. For this purpose he has ordained the even flow of time to be almost imperceptible to our observation. We perceive not its progress, as it steals along, nor the ravage it makes in its course. Time, says St. Austin, is a feeble imitation of eternity, and it endeavours to supply the want of consistency, by succession: when one day is past, another succeeds so exactly similar, that we do not regret what we have lost; and thus it is that time deludes us, and conceals from us its rapidity. A long reach of his course will, however, discover the deception: the advancing infirmities of age bear testimony that a great portion of our existence is already ingulfed in his rapid stream. In this visible depredation of our better days, and even while time is daily despoiling the human form, it still affects to imitate eternity. For as it is the characteristic of eternity to continue things as they are, so time acts its feeble imitation, by gradual advances, by leading us through a gently sloping, imperceptible descent, to the shades of death. If still you obstinately persevere in the path of vice, let me ask what it is that urges you to this infatuated conduct? Do you foresee, that, on some future day, you

will meet with a more favourable occasion? Do you expect a gospel more accommodating? a judge less severe? Do you expect another paradise? another hell? When the passion that is now the tyrant of your heart, shall have quitted its possession, do you imagine you will be more at liberty? Will not the satiated crime yield to a successor, and the second to a third, and so progressively, till the last link of iniquity will be fastened to your coffin?

“ I know thy works,” says the Apocalypse; “ thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.” (Apoc. chap. iii. v. 1.) The tree which is dead, may still occupy its place. Behold yon spreading oak, stripped of its leaves, naked and sapless: death has touched its vital part, and withered its roots; nevertheless it maintains its station, and extends its majestic branches! Whoever in this assembly is addicted to habitual vice, let him here survey his image. Although he is not swept from the face of the earth, and plunged into the abyss of hell, yet God has withdrawn his Holy Spirit from him, and he is spiritually dead. But of this audience let me entertain a more cheering hope; I will not think that this day my voice has been as an

empty cymbal. I trust I have excited some salutary emotion in your breast, and that you will, like the tree in the opening of the vernal season, display symptoms of animation. The love of God must be the leading principle of this spiritual existence. Do not imagine that the avocations of life, the hurry of business, the demands of professional duties, or even the calls of innocent amusements, are incompatible with this great command. Any object which we have deeply at heart, frequently recurs to our mind, without forcing our attention, and without torturing our memory. Ask the mother if it be necessary to remind her of her only child?

Illustrious monarch! you whom we behold indefatigably occupied with the duties of your exalted station, I offer you this day an employment of a more exalted nature—the service of God! For what, Sir, will it avail you to have lifted so high the glory of your country? to have stretched her celebrity to the remotest parts of the globe? that you have rendered the most ancient kingdom the most formidable? that you have occupied the world with your name? unless you direct your mind to works

which are of estimation in the sight of God, and which deserve to be recorded in the book of life?

I mentioned in a former part of this discourse, the terrors which are to usher in the last day, when the Saviour of the world will appear in tremendous majesty, and send judgment unto victory. Reflect, if the stars are then doomed to fall, if the glorious canopy of the heavens is to be rolled together as a scroll, how will those works endure which are constructed by man? See the fiery destruction rushing on towns, fortresses, citadels, palaces, till the whole globe becomes a general conflagration, and shortly after a mass of cinders.

Can you, Sir, affix any real grandeur to what must one day be blended with the dust? Elevate then your mind, and fill the page of your life with other records, with other annals.

Let me remind this audience, before I conclude, that the motives which now urge us to desist from the present course of our life, become every day more cogent! Death advances, habitual sin is gaining ground, and our hearts are petrifying. "Now," says the Apostle, "is our salvation nearer than we believed."

(Rom. chap. iii. v. 11.) If our salvation approaches, our damnation approaches also : they advance together, and one or the other must be our eternal destiny. Let us all embrace the salvation offered us by so merciful a Saviour, who came into the world full of grace and truth. Let us be faithful to his grace, and attentive to his truth, in order that we may participate of his glory.



SERMON II.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.—Matt. ch. i. v. 21.

THIS day the God of Israel makes his first entrance into the temple: this day the High Priest of the New Testament, the Sovereign Sacrificer, resigns himself into the hands of the pontifical successors of Aaron, who was an emblem of his priesthood: the God of Moses bows to the law of Moses: the INEFFABLE condescends to receive a name from the lips of man, at the instigation of the Holy Spirit. Surrounded thus with mysteries, to which sublime subject shall I direct my attention? Shall I speak of the circumcision of the Saviour, or shall I dwell on the name of Jesus? that name which is the delight of heaven, and of earth; that name which is our only consolation, as we

wander through the pilgrimage of life. This venerable temple, which is dedicated to that holy name, and a certain impulse glowing at my heart, urge me to pronounce the name of Jesus, and unfold (if my humble voice dare presume) its mysterious excellence—Jesus! that is to say, Saviour! a name that embraces, in the most extensive sense, benevolence and charity. Let me, then proclaim the glory which pertains to the Redeemer, for having exercised so great a mercy in our regard, in saving us by the effusion of his precious blood. Let this hallowed roof resound with the name of Jesus! Were our eyes sufficiently spiritualized and divested of the obscuring film of mortality, we should behold angels crowding this temple, and we should see them reverently bow, whenever we pronounce the name of Jesus.

As man is made to resemble, in some instances, the brute creation, so is he conscious of a disposition which takes a more exalted aim, and unites him almost with the nature of celestial intelligences. True as it may be, that the soul is degraded, and pressed down with the weight of its material investment, nevertheless the Apostle, preaching to the Athenians, in-

forms them, that man is allied to God! "we are also his offspring." The Divine Creator, in compassion to man, whom he has formed after his own image, lets fall on his soul some scintillations of that flame which glows in the seraphic breast. It is worthy of remark, that we no sooner arrive at the age of reason, than the opening mind is endowed with a kind of inspiration, which brings with it a consciousness of God. In all our afflictions, in all our wants, does not a secret instinct prompt us to cast our eyes to Heaven, as if we were convinced that there resides the Arbiter of human events? This is the homage the Pagans paid to God, without knowing him. It is, as Tertullian excellently observes, the Christianity of nature.

Besides this natural elevation of the mind to God, there is also in man an impulse (springing up from the bosom of his nature), which leads him to social intercourse; hence that communication, that mental commerce through the organs of speech. These are the two propensities which actuate the whole human race: from the first arises religion, from the other society. But as every thing human tends to perversion, unless restrained by the hand of discipline, it was

necessary to establish a form of government, embracing profane, as well as more exalted objects: without the one, religion would be subverted; and society would degenerate into confusion without the other. Hence arose those two legitimate authorities, royalty, and the order of priesthood. The Roman emperors, those lords of the earth, thought they should acquire an accession of dignity, by adding the title of Sovereign Pontiff to the magnificent appellations of Augustus and of Cæsar; and when I behold those monsters of the human race, a Nero, a Caligula, performing the duties of priesthood, I cannot help declaring that the gods of stone and of bronze, the adulterous and parricidal deities which blind antiquity adored, were worthily served, and their altars worthily attended, by such infamous ministers.

But thou, oh Jesus, king of the Christian world! oh Pontiff of the true God! be thou this day exalted! oh, exercise this day your royalty, by the dispensation of your grace, and exercise your priesthood by the expiation of our crimes. We now commemorate the day on which the Son of God received the name of Jesus, and yielded to the first effusion of his

blood: they who are scandalized at the shedding of this sacred blood, they who imagine the violent death he endured, was the tacit avowal of his imbecility, are very imperfectly initiated into the mysteries of Calvary! The cross is the throne of our heavenly King! and the altar of our heavenly Pontiff! Oh Saviour, oh Pastor of our souls! let fall one sanctifying drop of thy blood on these lips, which are to utter so often the adorable name of Jesus.

I shall not dwell upon the mistaken notion which even the Apostles affixed to the character of the Messiah, but shall endeavour to explain the sentiments which the holy Jesus entertained upon that subject. I cannot observe, without an emotion of astonishment, the conduct of the Son of God in this particular: I see him through the course of his ministry displaying, even with parade, the lowliness of his condition; and when the hour approaches which is to terminate in his death, the word Glory dwells on his lips, and he discourses with his disciples of nothing but his greatness. On the eve of his ignominious death, when the traitor Judas had just gone from him big with his execrable intention, it was then the Saviour of the

world cried out with a divine ardour, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." Tell me in what manner is he going to be glorified? what means the emphatic word *now*? Is he to rise above the clouds, and from thence to launch vengeance on his foes? or is the angelic hierarchy, seraphs, dominations, principalities, and powers! to descend from high, and pay him instant adoration? Ah no! he is going to be degraded, to submit to excruciating pain, and to expire with malefactors. This is what he denominates his glory; this is what he esteems his triumph. Behold him as he makes his entrance into Jerusalem, riding on an ass. Ah, Christians! let us not be ashamed of our Heavenly King: let the sceptic, the deist deride, if they please, this humble appearance of the Son of God: but I will tell human arrogance, that this lowly exhibition was worthy of the King who came into this world, in order to degrade, to crush beneath his feet all terrestrial grandeur! I do not mean, however, to call your attention to this point. Behold! behold! what a concourse of people of all ages, of all conditions, precede his entrance into Jerusalem, with branches of palm trees in their

hands, in the act of exultation; how the air resounds with these acclamations: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Whence is this sudden change, so opposite to his former conduct? whence is it, that he now courts applause, whom we see, in another part of the gospel, retiring to the summit of a solitary mountain, to escape from the solicitations of the multitude, who assembled from all the neighbouring cities and villages, for the purpose of electing him their King? He now listens with complacency to the people, who accost him with that title. The jealous Pharisees endeavour to impose silence on the multitude; but our Saviour replies, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Let me again repeat, whence is this abrupt change of conduct? He approves of what he lately abhorred; he accepts what he lately rejected. The last time he entered Jerusalem, it was in order to die; and in consonance with the sentiments of the Messiah, to die is to reign. How dignified was his conduct through the whole process of his passion! how august his deportment at the tri-

bunal of Pilate ! Did he not humble the majesty of the Roman fasces, by the dignity of silence ? Let Pilate return into the pretorium, for the purpose of interrogating our Saviour ; he will make no reply, but to one question : the Roman president says, " Art thou a king ? " The Son of God, who had disdained to utter any answer to the other questions of his judge, no sooner heard his title to royalty mentioned, than he abruptly replies, " Thou sayest that I am a King ; to this end was I born ; and for this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Yes ! I comprehend you, oh my Saviour, oh my King ! it is your glory to suffer for the love of your people, and you will not claim the sceptre, till you are going, by the means of a victorious death, to deliver your subjects from eternal slavery. Let heaven and earth burst forth into a song of praise. You, oh faithful and happy subjects of the Saviour King, you who have been regained and conquered to his protection, at so high a price, what gratitude, what loyalty, what affection can ever repay the magnitude of such a benefit ? It is not the palace, the throne, the gorgeous accompaniments of

royalty, that lead my imagination captive. But when I behold (in whatever country) a whole people expecting and receiving protection and liberty from the hand of a monarch; when I view a civilized state; when I see the land cultivated; when I see the freedom of the ocean unrestrained; when I see every person living unmolested beneath his peaceful roof; when I behold the rays of royalty, like the sun-beams, darting their salutary influence over the remotest part of the kingdom; then, then, my understanding moves a willing captive round this glorious spectacle. Send now your capacious view over the whole globe, and you will find that the dispensation of blessings, so profusely scattered, and so widely disseminated, is the gift of our celestial King.

But to the virtuous subjects he is still a more liberal Monarch; through him they not only live, but entertain a hope of future felicity, a hope of reigning themselves; for such is the munificence of our celestial King, that in his court every brow is to be encircled with a diadem. Attend to the beautiful hymn of the twenty-four elders, who represent, perhaps, the assemblage of the faithful of the Old and

New Testament; twelve represent the patriarchs, the fathers of the synagogue, and the other twelve represent the twelve apostles, the princes and the founders of the church: observe that the elders are crowned, that they fall prostrate in humble adoration before the Lamb, singing, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." Let me ask this Christian audience, if human grandeur dare enter into competition with the splendour of this celestial court? Cyneas, the ambassador of Pyrrhus, in speaking of ancient Rome, says that he beheld in that imperial city as many kings as senators! But our God calls us to a more resplendent exhibition: in this court, in this nation of elected kings, in this triumphant city, whose walls are cemented by the blood of Christ, I do not only affirm that we shall behold as many kings as senators, but I assert that there will be as many kings as inhabitants! The King of the world admits to the participation of his throne the people whom he has redeemed with his blood: oh, sacred blood, advantageously effused! oh, spotless life, benevolently resigned! oh, victorious death! oh, triumphant degradation!

Let me now direct your notice to the cross, on which was displayed this inscription, in three languages ! “ *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.* ” It is true that Pilate wrote these words in opposition to the Jews. This complacent judge, who sacrificed the innocent Jesus lest he should offend the synagogues, becomes of a sudden obstinately determined to preserve three or four words which he wrote without any design, and which appeared of so little importance. Oh God of my Saviour, I here behold thy secret interposition ; it was thy will that the royalty of Jesus should be proclaimed from the ignominious cross on which he expired. The inscription is written in Hebrew, which is the language of the people of God ! it is written in Greek, which is the language of the learned ! and it is written in Latin, which is the language of the empire of the world ! Inventors of the arts, oh Grecians ! inheritors of the promise of God, oh Jews ! lords of the world, oh Romans ! draw near, read this pregnant inscription, and bend before your King : the time advances, when this unpitied, deserted Sufferer will call to his standard all the inhabitants of the earth. Let me yield to the exult-

ation that now warms my bosom, while Tertullian informs me, that in his days, in the infancy of the church, the name of Jesus was universally adored: "We form," says that illustrious personage, "almost the greatest number in every town. *Pars pæna major civitatis cujusque.*" The invincible Parthians, the antinome Thracians, so called by the ancients in consequence of their refractory nature, which disdained the restraint of law; these ardent, undisciplined minds, submitted to the yoke of Jesus. The Medes, the Armenians, the Persians, the remote Indians, the Moors, the Arabs, the extensive provinces of the East, Egypt, Ethiopia, Africa, the wandering Scythian, the savage inhabitant of Barbary, embrace the humanizing doctrine of Christ. England, inaccessible from its immortal bulwark, the ocean; "even on the shore of this isle," says Tertullian, "the faith of Christ has landed." The British coast, which the stately ships of the warlike Romans approached with caution, with peril, and with labour, the boat of the holy fisherman found of easy access. Shall I not mention the inhabitants of Spain, the warring nation of the Gauls, and the ferocious Germans, who were accus-

tomed to boast that they never would consent to fear, unless the canopy of the heavens should fall upon their heads? even these tigers crouch submissive to the Lamb. Rome, imperial Rome, that proud city, drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; even she lays her sceptre at the foot of the cross! Oh, sacred instrument of our salvation! thy form shall be erected over every temple, thy form shall be the ornament affixed to every diadem.

Allow me to imagine for an instant, that an angel, a celestial herald, suddenly made his appearance in the midst of this assembly, and that, accosting this audience, he should say, "How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the God of Israel is the true God, he it is who claims your adoration: if Baal is God, then let him receive your homage." Brethren, let me inform you that the ministers of the gospel are also heralds and messengers of the God of Hosts: I then demand of all who are listening to this discourse, and I prefer the same question to myself, Why do ye halt? if Jesus is your King, why is he not obeyed? if the prince of darkness is your king, why does he not receive your allegiance? You shudder at this exc-

crable proposition; I hear you say, "Jesus, Jesus, is the King, and the Lord of our affection." I nevertheless repeat the question, Why do ye halt? "If," says the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, "I be a Father, where is mine honour? if I be a Master, where is your fear?" (Malachi, chap. i.) Inform me which I am to believe, your words, or your actions? The Son of God commands us to approach the Father in poverty of spirit; why are we then encircled by a troop of licentious desires? He commands us to exercise benevolence towards one another; but the fiend Envy residing in our breast, prompts us to speak the language of calumny, and pamper the appetite of insatiable enmity; and while the hand of profusion is wasting our treasure, in vain does the Son of God command us to relieve the poor. If then Jesus is your King, pay to him the homage of your actions, as well as of your words; and if the prince of darkness is your king, add, without constraint, the homage of your words to your actions. But heaven and earth forbid we should ever make this sacrilegious choice. Let us conclude with renewing our vow of allegiance to our celestial King. "Oh, Jesus! oh,

Royal Master, to whom we so justly and exclusively belong, who has redeemed us with the price of unutterable love and unbounded charity, we acknowledge thee to be our Sovereign: we offer thee this day a solemn dedication of ourselves; thy law shall be the law of our hearts. I will sing thy praises; I will never cease proclaiming thy mercies; I vow to thee eternal fidelity; and in this entire consecration of myself to thy service, may I live, and may I die!



SERMON III.

THE PERFECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

TRUTH is a queen who may be said to inhabit her own excellence, who reigns invested with her own native splendour, and who is enthroned on her own grandeur, and on her own felicity. This queen, condescending to reign in this world for the good of man, our Saviour came down from above to establish her empire upon earth. Human reason is not consulted in the establishment of her empire. Relying on herself, on her celestial origin, on her infallible authority, she speaks, and demands belief; she publishes her edicts, and exacts submission: she holds out to our assent the sublime and incomprehensible union of the most blessed Trinity: she proclaims a man-God! and shows him to us extended on a cross, ex-

piring in ignominy and pain, and calls upon human reason to bow down before this tremendous mystery.

The Christian religion, not resting her cause upon the principles of human reason, rejects also the meretricious aid of human eloquence. It is true, however, the Apostles, who were her preachers, humbled the dignity of the Roman fasces, and laid them at the foot of the cross; and in those very tribunals to which the Apostles were summoned as delinquents, they made their judges tremble. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, as Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." Tell me, which is the judge, and which is the prisoner? "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." It is not the accused who solicits a respite, it is the terrified judge who proposes a delay to the criminal who stands before him. Thus did the Apostles conquer idolatry, and present their converts as willing captives to the true religion. But they accomplished this end, not by the artifice of words,

by the arrangement of seductive periods, and the magic of eloquence: they effected their purpose by a secret persuasive power which impresses, ah, more than impresses, which enchants the understanding. This power, this enchantment, being derived from Heaven, preserves its efficiency even as it passes through the lowly style of unadorned composition, like a rapid river, which, as it courses through the plain, retains the impetuosity which it acquired from the mountain whence it sprung, and from whose lofty source its waters were precipitated.

Let us then form this conclusion, that our Saviour has revealed to us the light of the gospel, that day-spring from on high, that celestial gift by means worthy of the Giver, and; at the same time, by means the most consonant with the demands of our nature. Surrounded as we are with error, and distracted with uncertainty, we do not require the aid of a doubting academician. But we stand in piteous need of a God to illuminate our researches. The path of reason is circuitous, and perplexed with thorns. Pursuit presupposes distance, and argument indecision. As the principle of our

conduct is the object of this inquiry, it is necessary to have recourse to an immediate and immutable belief. The Christian has nothing to investigate, because he finds every thing in his faith. If the articles of faith which Christ proposes to his acceptance are too immeasurable for the narrow capacity of his intellect, they may still be embraced by the expansive submission of his belief.

Let us dwell on a theme so interesting; let us still direct our view to those divine features which proclaim the celestial origin of our religion! When she first descended from above, did she not come as an unwelcome visitant? Rejection, hatred, and persecution, met her in every walk; nevertheless she made no appeal to human justice, no application to the secular power: she enlisted defenders worthy of her cause, who, in their sacred attachment to her interest, presented themselves to the stroke of the executioner in such numbers, that persecution grew alarmed, the law blushed at its own decree, and princes were constrained to recall their sanguinary edicts. It was the destiny of Truth (if I may be allowed the expression) to erect her throne in opposition

to the kings of the earth. She did not call for their assistance when she laid the foundation of her own establishment; but when the edifice rose from its foundation, and lifted high its impregnable towers, she then adopted the great for her children; not that she stood in need of their concurrence, but in order to cast an additional lustre on their authority, and to dignify their power. At the same time our holy religion maintained its independence; for, when kings are said to protect religion, it is religion who protects them, and is the firmest support of their thrones. I appeal for the ascertainment of this fact to ecclesiastical history, which may be called the history of the reign of Truth. The world threatened, while truth continued firm and immutable. Heresy polluted the course, the spring retained its purity: schism wounded the holy form of the church, while truth remained inviolable. Many were seduced, the weak were overcome, the strong were shaken: an Osius, an Origen, a Tertullian, and others, supposed to be the pillars of the sacred edifice, all fell ignominiously, while the white column stood immovable.

What rebellious spirit will dare resist an authority thus established? and how can it but excite my astonishment, that in a Christian kingdom of such long duration, so many are found who renounce the Gospel! Am I unfortunately doomed, wherever I go, to meet with these mental libertines, these rash censurers of the counsels of God? these ignorant blasphemers, who, as St. Jude expresses himself, "speak evil of those things which they know not." They are twice dead, according to the same apostle, because they are without charity, and because they have destroyed their faith: "trees," says the apostle, "without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots," and consequently severed from the church.

You who think yourselves endowed with a sagacity to pervade the secrets of God, approach, and unfold to us the mysteries of nature: the whole creation is spread out before you! choose your theme! unravel what is at a distance, or develope what is near; explain what is beneath your feet, or illustrate the wonderful luminary which glitters over your head. What! does your reasoning capacity stagger in the very threshold? Poor, presumptuous, wandering, erring traveller, do you expect that an

unclouded beam of truth is to illuminate your path? Ah, be no more deceived! advert to the dark tempestuous atmosphere diffused over that country through which we are all travelling: advert to the weakness, the imbecility of our reasoning power; and until the omniscient God shall remove the obscuring veil that hangs between heaven and earth, let us not reject the salutary aid and soothing intervention of faith.

I now turn from the infidel, and direct my view to the careless, inattentive man. The votaries of indolence are, perchance, as numerous as the votaries of infidelity. Lulled, as it were, into a kind of apathy, they scarcely know whether they are believers, or unbelievers. They are ready to embrace any opinion, provided they are left unmolested in the pursuit of a voluptuous life. The deists obtain no credit from the voluptuaries I am now describing; not that they censure the opinion of the deist, but because they regard every thing with a somnolent indifference, except pleasure and business. I will endeavour to rouse their lethargic insensibility, and provoke their attention, by presenting to their view the unfading charms of the Christian morality.

PART THE SECOND.

They who rashly assault the Christian doctrine, are ready to acknowledge the purity and the perfection of its moral tendency: but faith and morality are two excellencies which are inseparable. Two suns are as unnecessary in religion, as in nature; whoever is sent by God to illuminate our moral conduct, the same person is undoubtedly empowered to communicate the belief which ought to accompany the moral conduct; and, in my opinion, the Son of God displays a higher proof of his divinity in directing the march of morality, than in commanding the bed-ridden to walk. He most assuredly is more than man, who, amidst the crowd of pressing errors, contending passions, discordant opinions, diversified fancies, ever-varying conceits, and increasing uncertainties, could point out the infallible line of conduct. Thus to reform, is to create; and the same wisdom must have assisted at the birth of such moral excellence, as formerly presided at the creation of the world.

How imperfect is the attempt that ancient philosophy made to draw the portrait of moral

excellence ! If on her canvass some faint appearances of beauty dawn, how the colouring fades before the chaste but glowing charm of our divine original ! I now propose to hold to your view this object of legitimate adoration, and point out the leading features of Christian morality.

The great characteristic excellence is, her referring man to his Creator, in the most extensive sense—root, branch, and fruit ! that is to say, his nature, faculties, and actions. In this dedication of ourselves to God, this moral prompter tells us we are his victims, and she therefore commands us to restrain our licentious passions, those subtle seducers of our reason : she enters the closest recesses of the heart, to extinguish even a spark, lest it might kindle into a flame : she strangles infant resentment, lest it should grow up to a gigantic enmity ; from the impulse of jealousy she restrains the wandering eye, for fear she should lose the heart. Her whole pursuit is to render our material part submissive to the mind, and the mind submissive to God. This, in a word, is the *sacrifice* which is required of us.

Let us now consider the institution of mar-

riage, from whose chaste rites our Saviour has precluded the approach of polygamy. Affection is no longer permitted to stray from her first object, while, through the consecrated union of two hearts, flow domestic concord and family attachment. Our Saviour having replaced this holy institution on its primitive ground, Purity watches at the sacred couch, and Human Nature resumes her dignity.

The next religious obligation is our obedience to the authority of princes and of magistrates. Tertullian remarks how strictly this duty was observed by the Christian converts: he says to the ministers of the emperors, "The number of your enemies decreases, from the growing multitude of Christians."

This is a faint sketch of the Christian morality: what perfection is diffused through the whole system, reaching equally every part! He is the enemy of mankind who rejects the Gospel. Jesus Christ has reared his moral precepts upon the foundation of faith; and when so perfect an edifice attracts our notice, shall we tell the Divine Architect that the foundations are insecure? shall we not rather conclude, from the beauty and strength of the super-

structure, that the same wisdom has attended to that part which is out of view? As for myself, I am ready to confess that my reason submits, and that my heart surrenders its affections to this holy institution. The moral excellence alone of Christianity would impel me to embrace its faith: this faith and this morality are pledges of one another: they form a sacred alliance, an indissoluble union, which the power, the malice, the ingenuity of heresy can never tear asunder.



SERMON IV.**Preached before the King.****ADVERTISEMENT.**

The severe and unrestrained reproaches which the indignant orator utters in the following Discourse against the distinguished part of his audience, must not be understood as a formal accusation against the French nobility, for a wilful inattention to the poor. There being no established provision for that unfortunate class of society, the preachers thought it incumbent upon them to enforce the topics of charity with a peculiar energy.

IMPENITENCE.*The rich man also died, and was buried.*

St. Luke, chap. xvi. v. 22.

I HAD proposed to have drawn from this text two distinct discourses, one on the life of the rich man, the other on his unfortunate end; but it occurred to me, that if I did not bring to

view the death of the rich man connected with his life, there might be some in this assembly, who would avail themselves of this division, and separate what is irresistibly connected, by entertaining the presumptuous hope, that they would be able in their old age, or on the confines of the grave, to atone for the irregularities and vices of their past life. — I come here this day to combat that delusive opinion, and I wish to impress, to engrave on your mind, this rigorous but salutary truth, that a vicious life inevitably terminates in a death of impenitence.

As at the close of a theatrical exhibition, the leading personage does not assume a new character, why should we look for an inconsistency in the last scene of life? Pleasure and business entirely occupy the man of the world: and this pleasure, united with worldly concerns, hardens his heart, and renders him insensible to the misfortunes of others. The rich man, we find, “which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,” and who probably was also a man of business and political intrigue, was so attentive to the alternate demands of pleasure and of business, that he did not even cast a glance of compas-

sion on the beggar, who was laid at his gate full of sores. This is the picture of the worldly man. Many who are listening to this discourse, will, I fear, unless they quit the ruinous path they now tread, many, I am bold to say, will find themselves involved in this parable. Let us now suppose the rich man extended on the bed of death, and trembling at the opening of eternity! In this perilous situation he casts his distressful eyes to heaven, and in broken dejected accents implores the mercy of God; but as he never exercised any commiseration towards others, Heaven, in return, is deaf to the voice of his affliction; till, passing through many anxieties, perturbations, mental conflicts and alarms, he arrives at the closing fatal period, from which I recoil with terror.

Let not any one in this audience imagine that the parable of the rich man relates only to those persons in high station who are the most profligate and abandoned: it extends even to those who are passionately addicted to amusements and avocations of an innocent nature. For the Son of God does not speak of the extortions, of the adulteries, of the blasphemies of the rich man; he only says that he was

clothed in purple and sared sumptuously; which is to teach us, that not only the forbidden object, but that an unrestrained indulgence of innocent pursuits also constitutes a crime. Ye great! ye rich! ye splendid favourites of fortune! I will not disguise my feelings, I will candidly own that I tremble at your destiny. The rider who urges his swift steed to the precincts of a given boundary, is in the rapidity of his career irresistibly carried beyond the goal. And when once the habit of immoderate attachment is formed, it requires almost a miraculous interposition to break the bonds which chain us to the earth. I entertain therefore little confidence in the abrupt repentance of an habitual sinner, or in those languid conversions which are born on the bed of the expiring sinner.

There are some, who, though not in possession of their wishes, though frequently repulsed by disappointment, still dedicate themselves to the world with all the ardour of hope. The world, that great promiser, allures these votaries to his altar, by dazzling expectancies, and the bright prospect of reversions, till at length they reach the foot of the grave, dragging after them

the long, immeasurable chain of their blasted hopes.

There are others who are confident that they are advancing in the path of virtue, if they occasionally attend the divine service, yield to the casual impulse of benevolence, and contribute their mite to some charitable institution: these persons are no more severed from the world, in consequence of these occasional practices, than the stately oak is rooted from the earth, when the wind rushing through the branches disturbs its solemn repose.

Let us now return to the sick chamber of the rich man; behold him, pale and ghastly; the hour-glass of life is pouring fast its few remaining sands. The terrible denunciation of Ezekiel is now applicable to him: "an end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. (Ezekiel, chap. vii.) Unhappy criminal! come and plead your cause before the omniscient Judge! Among your accusing witnesses, behold the poor who bear testimony to your inexorable heart. To that insensibility which the poor too frequently experience from the great, I now wish to direct and confine your attention.

The great apostle calls those who are addicted to pleasure, men without natural affection. Though an inveterate attachment to the world and its pleasures may appear to have nothing in its nature of a malevolent tendency, yet under the veil of amenity lurks a malignant power. When I listen to the voluptuary in Solomon, I meet with nothing at first, but what is innocently gay: "let no flower of the spring pass by us, let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they are withered." (Wisdom of Solomon, chap. ii.) But as the voluptuary proceeds we hear him say, "Let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the gray hairs of the aged." Ver. 10. Who would suspect that so savage a disposition could rise out of manners so gentle and alluring? This is, however, the characteristic of voluptuousness. You will tell me, this audience is free from the crime which I am now arraigning: but let me inform you, that there are other crimes for which the voluptuous man is responsible: for besides that barbarity which extends to the active oppression of the poor, there is another species of cruelty attending the voluptuary, which closes his ear to the voice of

complaint, and his bosom to the softening visitations of nature. Be not astonished, gentlemen, if I tell you that this cruelty is robbery without violence, and murder, without the shedding of blood; and I will boldly assert that the inhuman rich man in the Gospel, robbed the beggar at his gate, because he did not clothe him, and murdered him, because he did not feed him. O God of clemency! it was surely not for this purpose you communicated to the great a portion of your power: no! you exalted them far above the condition of their fellow-creatures, in order that they might become the parental guardians of the poor. Yet they every day meet with a number of helpless, disconsolate, indigent suppliants: it might almost be said, that Misery, personified, stretches her emaciated form at their door, weeping and lamenting. I am not moved with astonishment at this melancholy picture: how can the rich man listen to the voice of the poor amidst the clamour of his own ravening desires? And therefore the poor are neglected, abandoned, consigned to their unhappy lot, and even doomed to perish. Yes! they languish, they sicken, they die for

want on your estates, in your villages, and at the gates of your palaces.

It is an alarming truth, that prosperity, independent of any criminal habit, is too apt to harden the heart. This is the malediction that attends human grandeur; and here we see how the spirit that influences the world, acts in opposition to the genuine spirit of Christianity. What is the great characteristic of Christianity? Compassion! What is the leading principle among the great? Self-love! Hear the language of the rich man in the words of the Prophet: "Thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else besides me." (Isaiah, chap. xlvii. v. 10.) "This crowd of miserable objects that press upon my view have no claim to my attention, they are not to interrupt me in the career of pleasure."

But God is equitable; and the time must come when you, ye great, will stand in need of mercy: I do not threaten you with the loss of your estates, or with the change of situation: those are casual events! The closing period, the fatal day will come, when, encircled by your friends, by your relatives, by your domestics, you will nevertheless find yourselves more

abandoned than the wretch, who dies without a winding-sheet to cover him in his grave. Far other friends, far other ministers of comfort, will then be wanting. The poor whom you have neglected—ah ! had you applied in time to them, had you cultivated their friendship, they now would have opened to you the gates of mercy and of heaven : had you solaced their woes, had you sometimes benignly listened to their complaints, your compassion would now have forcibly pleaded your cause ; the benedictions with which they would have hailed you in the days of their distress, would have allayed the perturbations that distract your mind. It is now too late ! Your obdurate heart has excited a sympathetic obdurateness in the bosom of God. Although you may perform some charitable dispensations at your death, you act in vain ! The sky is to you an iron canopy, and your prayers cannot pass through !

The rigours of God's justice have not relented towards this unhappy country. In his clemency, it is true, he has accorded to France the blessing of peace ; but our continual crimes have awakened his resentment : his outstretched arm afflicts us with sickness, mortality, and fa-

mine. The irregular march of the seasons, and distempered nature, seem to threaten us with the most fatal calamities, unless we endeavour to appease his anger. In the distant provinces, in this town, in the centre of luxury and profusion, on the confines of pleasure, in the very bowers of bliss, a number of wretched families die of want. This is no exaggeration: I do not appear in this awful place as an actor on the stage, for the purpose of exciting compassion with invented tales of distress: the calamity I deplore is a truth too well attested.

Let it hence be no more a subject of inquiry concerning our obligation to relieve the poor: famine, famine has silenced the inquiry; despair has terminated the question: and, according to the opinion of the theologians of every age, if we do not assist the ulcered beggar at our gate, we are guilty of his death, and we are responsible to God for his blood, for his soul, for every excess into which his rage, hunger, and despair betrayed him.

Your Majesty has given edifying proofs of your benevolent disposition to the poor, which I trust will be followed by the most salutary effects. Though kings cannot do all their na-

tural generosity excites them to perform, they are one day to give a strict account to God, for all they were able to perform. This, Sire, is all that a minister of the Gospel presumes to say to your Majesty : I will say the rest to God ! and humbly entreat the King of kings, that he would furnish you with the means of satisfying the love you bear your people, of gratifying the demands of your benevolence, and of erecting on that sure foundation, charity, the superstructure of your eternal happiness.



SERMON V.

Preached before the Court.

CONVERSION.

*Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees:
every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth
good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
St. Luke, chap. iii. v. 9.*

IF the preacher in the desert were to appear before this august assembly; if the voice that cried out in the wilderness were to resound in this temple; would the preacher, in surveying the tenour of your life, remove the axe from the tree? Would the voice which cried out in the wilderness breathe here in softer accents? Would it not rather utter with a more energetic power, "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire?" To allure you from the erroneous

course you are, perhaps, now pursuing, and by that means to save you from being involved in the exterminating menace my text displays, I should wish to possess your mind with this idea, that the indulgence of the passions does not, even in this life, secure happiness. Sin, which deranges the order of the world, excites a perturbation in the bosom where it was first conceived. The vengeance you inflict on the offender, must necessarily raise a turbulent emotion in that heart through which it rushes. Injustice, which possesses what belongs to another, plunders first its author, by depriving him of that perpetual fountain of contentment, integrity ! Ambition has its corroding moments, trembles at contending rivalry, and is acquainted with the torture of disappointment. Even on the most elevated station, Misfortune will erect her standard, and from that eminence throw Ambition down the precipice with a more terrible destruction. Avarice, that odious passion, is also but feebly gratified, while, with its iniquitous treasure, it accumulates a mass of disquietude. Even the chalice of adulterous love is poisoned with the venom of jealousy. Extracting then from our passions, the small

portion of substantial pleasure that attends them, we shall find that a gratified passion plants a thorn in the reflecting mind, and lodges an ever-gnawing disquietude in the heart.

Advert once more to the words of the text : " Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." Imagine you hear a voice addressing the unfruitful tree—" Gentle showers have moistened your branches : the sun has benignly shed on your form its animating influence. No care, no cultivation has been wanting ; therefore the axe and the fire are your destiny." Apply these words, and bring them home to your own bosom. Early instruction was poured as the morning dew on your mind. The exciting object of good example was placed before your opening eye. Virtue informed your young ideas how to shoot. No care, no cultivation has been wanting ; and therefore, with the unfruitful tree, the axe and fire must be your doom.

Tell me not that you are young, and in the full enjoyment of health : frequent instances occur within the circle of your acquaintance, which prove that health and vigour are feeble

barriers against the power of death. But even under the prolongation of your life the fatal lot may be decided. The injured Deity may be said to strike the blow when he withdraws his sanctifying grace; and if it be irrevocably withdrawn, the root has felt the destructive axe, and hope is dead. Let us then hasten to produce the fruit which is required of us. It may, however, be said, that in case the axe is already laid at the root, there is not time sufficient for the production of fruit. This is not the necessary consequence; the spiritual fruit I am speaking of, springs instantaneously with the sigh that heaves from the heart: unfortunate then is that person, ah, most unfortunate! who shall quit this temple without feeling, in his heart, that productive desire. Let him smite his flinty bosom; let him liberally dispense his superfluities among the poor, for the purpose of recovering, through the mercy he exercises towards his neighbour, that grace which he has forfeited. Some of the charitable institutions of the metropolis demand immediate succour, while Profusion presides at your tables, and Sumptuousness spreads out your furniture. If you are still inadvertent of the repeated admo-

nitions of the ministers of the Gospel, I will not hesitate to pronounce, that your situation is truly alarming. How can I entertain any hope of amendment from the female part of this audience, when I see them enter this awful abode in so dissolute an attire, as if with an intent to allure the eye of wantonness ! Will you presume that you bring with you a penitential disposition, when I behold you ornamented with the profusive hand of vanity ? Do you not appear more the idols of the temple than the victims of the altar ? Take warning from the Jewish nation ; the Jews contemned the voice of the prophets : God shook that haughty nation, as the storm assails the tree. Her crown, her sceptre fell ! To God the sceptre is as a reed ; and, when he pleases, the reed is as a sceptre. The temple, however, stood ! Sacrifices still were offered ! The authority of the pontiffs was still held sacred ! and an appearance of government was still exhibited ! But Jesus entered on his mission ; and not long after, the Jewish nation, which we have represented under the image of a great tree, was torn up by the roots. Titus, the avenger of our Saviour, comes ! The Roman

eagle urges his descending flight, and Judea is no more ! Although Titus was ignorant of the crime, he acknowledged himself to be the instrument of God's vengeance. Apollonius Tyanæus says, that Titus was offered a crown in consideration of his taking Jerusalem; but he declined that honour, saying, that he was nothing more than an instrument in the hand of God, who manifested, on this occasion, his resentment against the Jewish nation. The temple is now demolished, the sacrifices cease, the nation is scattered, and is become the object of universal derision. May this terrific catastrophe impress us with a trembling awe, lest the same people, who, when they were favoured by the protection of God, prefigured the grace we now enjoy, should, under the scourge of his afflicting hand, predict some unforeseen calamity to our own country !



SERMON VI.

THE PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah, chap. liii. v. 6.

THE most soothing consolation to the man who is plunged in affliction, is the consciousness of his innocence; which, like an angel, watches at his side, and whispers comfort to his soul. The holy confidence arising from the consideration of innocence, supported the martyrs, and upheld their enduring patience under the pressure of the severest tortures! This consideration acted with a magical influence: it calmed their sufferings; it lulled the exquisite sensation of the flames while they consumed their bodies, and diffused over their countenance the expression of a celestial joy. But Jesus, the innocent Jesus, found no such consolation in his sufferings: what was given

to the martyrs was denied to the King of Martyrs. Under the ignominy of the most disgraceful death, under the hostile impression of the most agonizing torments, he was not allowed to complain, nor even to think that he was treated with injustice. It is true, he was innocent respecting man; but what did the recollection of an immaculate life avail him? The heavenly Father, from whom alone he looked for consolation, who from eternity had shed upon his beloved Son the effulgence of his glory, now withdraws his sacred beams, and, darkening round, spreads over his head as an angry cloud! Behold, behold the innocent Jesus, the spotless Lamb, suddenly become the goat of abomination, burdened with the crimes, the impieties, the blasphemies of all mankind. It is no longer the Jesus who once said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (St. John, chap. viii. v. 46.) He presumes no more to speak of his innocence. Oh, Jesus! Jesus! I dare not now pronounce you innocent, while I see you bending beneath the weight of universal guilt. Brethren, what a subject for our most serious thoughts! what a theme for our affection! For you, and for me, this miracle

of benevolence is performed. Devoid as we are of all merit, what have we to offer to our suffering Redeemer but our gratitude? Were you forcibly impressed with this sublime act of charity, your tears and lamentations would interrupt this discourse. See imputed to our divine Saviour the crimes of the whole world: all the perfidies that ever were acted, all the impurities and adulteries that ever were committed, all the sacrileges that ever were executed, and all the imprecations, all the blasphemies that ever were yelled from the throats of unbelievers. This turbulent ocean of iniquity is ready to engulf our Redeemer; whichever way he casts his eyes, he sees torrents of sin bursting upon him. Let us now approach the divine Sufferer, and behold him carrying his cross! I confess that this incident overpowers my bosom with affectionate gratitude. To be fastened to the cross is to suffer the punishment of malefactors; but to carry the cross was esteemed as a public avowal of the condemned person, that the death he was going to suffer was justly ordained; and, therefore, when our Saviour was in the act of carrying his cross, he bore testimony to the justice of his

condemnation. But to proceed: the cross is now uplifted, exhibiting the sublime victim! Now flows the sacred blood! The Jew exclaims, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew, chap. xxvii. v. 25.) So it shall, thou race accursed! Thy prayer shall be granted far beyond thy expectation: that vocal blood shall call down a peculiar vengeance, which shall set a stigma upon you to the end of time; till, mitigating the austerity of his justice, the Almighty shall extend his protection to the wretched remnant of your countrymen!

But to us the divine mercy was immediately extended. As we sometimes see the face of the heavens wrapt in a brooding storm, till, gathering to maturity, it bursts with a tremendous explosion, yet wasting its strength as it descends, and losing, as it were, its resentment in diffusion, the face of the heavens resumes its wonted cheerful serenity; so the fulminating wrath of God overwhelms his sacred Son; but, like a cloud rent asunder by its own vehemence, the storm subsides, the Deity relents, and the returning beams of mercy glitter from his throne!

By a wonderful commutation, which comprises the mystery of our salvation, the heavenly Father abandons the innocent Son, in consequence of his unbounded love towards guilty man ! and receives him into the arms of his forgiveness for the love of his innocent Son ! How feeble is description, how inadequate is language to uphold this weight of mercy ! Let this church be to every one of us a Calvary ! and let us not depart from hence before we have kindled in our bosom the flame of eternal gratitude for the sublime act of mercy which is this day recorded throughout the Christian world.



SERMON VII.

Preached before the King.

THE RESURRECTION.

Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.—Epistle to the Romans, chap. vi. v. 9.

THOU holy truth of our religion ! oh glorious Resurrection of the Redeemer ! oh cheering assurance of our immortality ! announced by the voice of prophecy, echoed by the attestation of beholders, resounded by the vocal blood of martyrs, confirmed by progressive belief through a long succession of centuries : oh glorious resurrection ! oh cheering assurance ! have you not yet exalted man above the pursuits of terrestrial objects ? Have you not yet elevated the human mind from earth to heaven ? Must the minister of the Gospel have still recourse to arguments in order to stimulate your

indolent belief? You tell me, indeed, that you are Christians, that you abhor that mental licentiousness which leads to scepticism. But wherefore, then, does your life correspond so ill with your belief? wherefore do you walk in the same path with the infidel? How is it that I behold you still dazzled with the splendour of the world, inebriated with its favour, and basking in its smile? Let us no longer deceive ourselves; let us avow the truth. Feeble Christians, or declared sceptics, we equally renounce, by the tenour of our lives, our claim to future felicity.

That life of future felicity which so little occupies your mind, tell me, is it not, at least, the object of your desire? If it be the object of your desire, let me inform you that this desire encloses the seed of immortality: it carries with it a silent testimony of that eternal life for which you were created. But this desire must be nourished in order to mature the seed of eternal felicity. The Jews, who did not know the power of *Christ's resurrection*, nor the powers of the world to come, preferred, it is true, the altar of the living God to the shrines of idolatry; but their wishes terminated in the

possession of temporal blessings. But thou, oh God ! art the object, the sole object, of our religious pursuit. ~~Whatever~~ Whatever is not eternal is unworthy of thy liberality as well as of our solicitude. I tremble, when I reflect how few of this audience accompanied me with sincerity of heart in the words I have just now uttered ! Lazarus, festering in his grave, is an emblem of your spiritual corruption : your soul is a religious corpse ! uninhabited by celestial thought, unanimated by the breath of prayer, abandoned by heaven ! an horrible spectacle to the view of angels ! Look, I entreat you, into this mirror that I hold up to the eye of your understanding, and there behold your spiritual form, and shudder at the sight ! But let it be an amazement, accompanied by sorrow, productive of the desire of mercy, and of confidence in the power of God ! When God transported the prophetic spirit of Ezekiel into the valley of bones, he heard a voice cry out, " Can these bones live ? Say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." The application is obvious ; bring it home to your own bosom, enforce it on your own deplorable situation. Let no time be lost : defer not, to a distant

period, the resurrection of your virtue; the voice that now whispers to your soul, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord," will, perhaps, never invite you more! The season of age and caducity will betray you: when you are arrived within a few steps of the grave, you will find neither time, disposition, nor capacity to perform the solemn task you have so long delayed: you will be alarmed, not converted; your soul will be encumbered with a train of confused, turbid, comfortless thoughts—(I have unhappily been a frequent witness to scenes of this nature :) your cold lips will utter a few imperfect prayers that will not reach the heart any more than water gliding over a marble stone will penetrate the substance. Seize then the present hour, the offered moment; why will you perish, oh house of Israel? You, my brethren, who have been distinguished by so many blessings, to whom, in your earlier days, the immaculate page of Christianity was unfolded, who were reared at the hallowed bosom of Religion, why will you perish? You for whom this roof resounds with the voice of the preacher, for whom that holy table is spread with celestial food, why will you perish? You

for whom Jesus died, you for whom he rose from the dead, who now interceding for your happiness, shows to his Father the sacred wounds he suffered for your salvation, why will you perish?

While your Majesty looks down from that eminence to which Providence has raised you; while you behold all your flourishing provinces reaping the harvest of happiness, and enjoying the blessings of peace; while you behold your throne encompassed with the affections of a loyal people, what have you to fear? where is that enemy who can injure your felicity? Yes, Sir! there is an enemy who can injure your felicity; that enemy is yourself! that enemy is the situation you adorn; that enemy is the glory which encircles you! It is no easy task to submit to the rule that seems to submit to us. Where is the canopy of sufficient texture to screen you from the penetrating and scorching beams of unbounded prosperity? Let me entreat you to descend in spirit from your exalted situation, and visit the tomb of Jesus; there you may meditate on loftier subjects than this world, with all its pomp, can offer to your attention; there you will learn, that by our Re-

deemer's ascent from the grave, you are entitled to a crown of immortal glory!

Let all of us assert our claim to this immortal life, to which we are entitled by the resurrection of our Redeemer; and that our claim may not prove abortive, let us frequently exalt our mind to the contemplation of diviner objects. The best method, perhaps, to raise our thoughts above this speck of earth, is first to contemplate on the deceitful and fugitive tenour of terrestrial existence. May we not compare human life to a road that terminates in a ruinous precipice? We are informed of the danger we incur; but the imperial command is announced, and we must advance. I should wish to turn back, in order to avoid the ruinous precipice; but the tyranness, Necessity, exclaims, "Advance, advance!" An irresistible power seems to carry me along! Many inconveniencies, many hardships, many untoward accidents occur; but they would appear trivial, could I withhold my steps from the ruinous precipice: no! no! an irresistible power urges me to proceed, even impels me to run; such is the rapidity of time! Some pleasurable circumstances, however, present themselves; we

meet with objects in the course of our journey, which attract attention : limpid streams ; groves resounding with harmony ; trees loaded with delicious fruit ; and flowers exhaling their aromatic soul into the passing gale. Here we should delight to loiter, and suspend the progress of our journey, but the voice exclaims, " Advance, advance ! " while all the objects we have passed, suddenly vanish, like the materials of a turbid dream. Some wretched consolation still remains : you have gathered some flowers as you passed by, which, however, wither in the hand that grasps them ; you have plucked some fruit from the loaded boughs, which, however, decays before it reaches the lip : this, this, is the enchantment of delusion ! In the progress of your destined course, you now approach the tremendous gulf which breathes forth a sombrous vapour that discolours every object. Behold the shadowy form of Death, rising from the jaws of the fatal gulf, to hail your arrival ! Your heart palpitates, your eyes grow dim, your cheek turns pale, your lips quiver, the final step is taken, and the hideous chasm swallows your trembling frame !

No comment is requisite to illustrate this imagery : it is clear and unquestionable as it is alarming : it is the abridged history of human life. They, however, who, while they pursue their prescribed course, exalt their aim to sublimer objects, when they arrive at the fatal precipice, will remain undaunted : the subject of this day's solemnity will be their bright assurance . their bosom will be impressed with the exulting confidence, that, like the blessed Redeemer, they will one day rise from the grave, to die no more.



SERMON VIII.

THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

*And when he was come near, he beheld the city,
and wept over it.—St. Luke, chap. xix.*

v. 41.

OUR Saviour having completed the occupations of his ministry, returns from Palestine to Jerusalem; and when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it; he beheld her invincible ramparts, her towering and magnificent edifices; the wonder of the universe, her majestic temple. Then beholding with prophetic eye the desolation which was to efface this glorious spectacle, the compassionate Jesus could not refrain from weeping! and he said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." What tenderness is comprised in these few

words, "If thou hadst known?" It is an expression pregnant of pity: as it is the characteristic of affliction to recoil from herself, and pause amidst broken accents and interrupted sentiments: "If thou hadst known," says the pitying Jesus; which words he undoubtedly pronounced with the most pathetic energy! "If thou hadst known," is an expression labouring with a meaning which lay so heavy at his heart, that he had not the power to give it utterance!

Nor is it wonderful that the sentiment of compassion should prevail in the bosom of our Redeemer. According to Tertullian, the first development of the economy of God towards man, is benevolence; and the reason is sufficiently clear; for, in order to trace the original inclination, we must seek for that which is the most natural, as nature is the root from which all other tendencies and sensations spring. Having the power to bless, it is nature in God to diffuse the blessing! As the fountain sends forth its waters, as the sun expands its beams; therefore it is that the Son of God, our Pontiff, our Advocate, our Intercessor, is assimilated to the Father, in the characteristic feature of benevolence. This amiable disposition is strongly

marked in these words of St. Peter to Cornelius, "Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good." (Acts, chap. x. v. 38.) Simple, and unadorned, but beautiful eulogium! How different from the insensate eloquence of the day; who, when he would extol some renowned soldier, tells us he marched through the country of the enemy with victory at his side. Now, what means, in the language of the panegyrist, to overrun the country of the enemy with victory at his side? is it not to open the flood-gates of blood, and to commit universal slaughter? How different was the passage of the victorious Jesus through Judea! Benevolence was the victory that accompanied his steps: affliction, sickness, mental disorder, flew at his approach. Not only the house where he sojourned was distinguished by his active compassion; every impression of his steps may be said to have been accompanied by the vestiges of his redundant goodness! As the sower scatters the seed as he moves along, the Son of God, wherever he went, diffused his divine favours: did any one inquire, why, in that town, or that hamlet, no lame or blind person, or any miserable object appeared? the

answer was ready: The compassionate Jesus has just passed through.

The Apostle, in the second Epistle to the Hebrews, has these remarkable words, to which I beg leave to call your particular attention:

“He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham:”

that is to say, he invested himself with our nature, in order that he might be subject to the calamities incident to our nature, and by that

means diffuse his exquisite sensibility into a sympathetic commiseration for all mankind.

From this argument flows a stream of comfort to the mansions of the unhappy; who are now

assured that he looks down from his heavenly abode with an eye of pity upon those who are

agitated with the same storms with which he was himself assailed. He has not effaced from

his memory the severe trials he experienced during the course of his earthly pilgrimage: he

beholds us travelling through the rugged paths which he once traversed, and therefore our sor-

rows, our complaints, find admission to his kindred bosom.

As for myself, I freely avow, that from this consideration arises my only, only hope! I

know that my Redeemer descended from Heaven, to form an intimate acquaintance with human misery; he entered the cave of affliction, and became a sojourner with the wretched, an associate with the sorrowful, in order to lodge deeper in his bosom the stings of sympathy.

To conclude: may this brief, but important discourse, important from its object, cleave to your mind! oh, may it call forth the finer sensibilities of our soul, may it warn our confidence, and inspirit our gratitude!



SERMON IX.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Gal. chap. ii. v. 14.

WHEN our Redeemer expired on the cross, sympathizing nature was convulsed! The sun was suddenly enveloped in midnight darkness, and confusion reigned! But I shall pass by these terrific events, in order to lead your attention to more important objects. The cross erected on Mount Calvary was the standard of victory, to which even thought was to be led captive, and before which imaginations were to be cast down: that is to say, human wisdom and sceptic reluctance. No voice sublime was heard sounding from a thunder-bearing cloud, as of old, from the heights of Sinai! No approach was observed of that formidable Majesty, before whom the moun-

tains melt as wax! Where, where was the warlike preparation of that power which was to subdue the world? See the whole artillery collected on Mount Calvary in the exhibition of a cross, of an agonizing Sufferer, and a crown of thorns!

Religious truth was exiled from the earth, and idolatry sat brooding over the moral world. The Egyptians, the fathers of philosophy, the Grecians, the inventors of the fine arts, the Romans, the conquerors of the universe, were all unfortunately celebrated for the perversion of religious worship, for the gross errors they admitted into their belief, and the indignities they offered to the true religion. Minerals, vegetables, animals, the elements became objects of adoration; even abstract visionary forms, such as fevers and distempers, received the honours of deification; and to the most infamous vices, and dissolute passions, altars were erected. The world, which God had made to manifest his power, seemed to have become a temple of idols, where every thing was god but God himself*!

* A remarkable coincidence of expression is to be found

The mystery of the crucifixion was the remedy the Almighty ordained for this universal idolatry. He knew the mind of man, and knew that it was not by reasoning an error must be destroyed, which reasoning had not established. Idolatry prevailed by the suppression of reason, by suffering the senses to predominate, which are apt to clothe every thing with the qualities with which they are affected. Men gave the Divinity their own figure, and attributed to him their vices and passions. Reasoning had no share in so brutal an error. It was a subversion of reason, a delirium, a phrensy. Argue with a phrenetic person, you do but the more provoke him, and render the distemper incurable. Neither will reasoning cure the delirium of idolatry. What has learn-

in the Bishop of Meaux, with our great dramatic poet.—Macbeth, in the fifth scene of the first act, says—

“——My thought,

Whose murder yet is but fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man, that function

Is smother'd in surmise, and *nothing is*

But what is not.”

Bossuet, in expatiating on the dominion and extent of Pagan worship, concludes with these words:—*Tout étoit Dieu, excepté Dieu lui même.*

ed antiquity gained by her elaborate discourses? her reasonings so artfully framed? Did Plato, with that eloquence which was styled divine, overthrow one single altar where those monstrous divinities were worshipped? Experience hath shown that the overthrow of idolatry could not be the work of reason alone. Far from committing to human wisdom the cure of such a malady, God completed its confusion by the mystery of the cross. Idolatry (if rightly understood) took its rise from that profound self-attachment inherent in our nature. Thus it was that the Pagan mythology teemed with deities who were subject to human passions, weaknesses, and vices. When the mysterious cross displayed to the world an agonizing Redeemer, incredulity exclaimed it was *foolishness!* But the darkening sun, nature convulsed, the dead arising from their graves, said it was wisdom!

Who is there of this numerous audience, whose lips are not ready to assert that the mystery of the cross is wisdom? Who is there of this numerous audience, whose life does not proclaim it foolishness? How few are there in this dissolute metropolis, to whom the Re-

deemer extended on the cross, is not an object of scandal? Yes, he is to thee an object of scandal, thou vindictive man! because he forgave injuries. He is to thee an object of scandal, thou usurer! because he had pity on the poor. Oh murderer of domestic happiness, thou adulterer! oh despoiler of the riches of the pious mind, thou profane deistic author! oh violator of character, thou satirist! thou calumniator! oh invader of the couch of innocence, thou seducer! yes, to all these the cross of the Redeemer is an object of scandal.

I do not presume to involve the inhabitants of this great town in a general accusation of an active, prominent contempt of the Son of God: but I am bold to say, that there is a lurking, unavowed disrespect for our Saviour lodged in the general breast, which is silently and treacherously gaining a destructive influence. The man who is dazzled with military glory, whose heart beats high with heroic ardour, who impels the whole current of his thoughts to warlike operations, who is fascinated with the laurel-wreath that encircles his temples—that man is inwardly ashamed of the

crown of thorns. The dissipated woman of rank, who with pride carries on her breast the symbol of salvation enchased in brilliants, harbours within that breast a silent shame of the sacred original. The poor man who murmurs at his fate, who is indignant of his lowly situation, who blasphemes the seeming partiality of Providence—he too is ashamed of the cross of the Redeemer.

But we who are assembled in this sacred temple, will ascend (in spirit) to Mount Calvary, and lead our thoughts captives to the foot of the cross. No longer ashamed of the spectacle of a suffering Redeemer, we will exult at this stupendous act of his benevolence. We will look upon this awful and mysterious scene, as a seeming suspension, or short parenthesis, of glory; as a discordant tone preparatory to the richest harmony; as the last shade of night melting into the lustre of eternal day, to the enjoyment of which we shall be entitled; if, while we sojourn upon earth, we learn to think and say, with the Apostle, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

SERMON X.

Preached before the Queen, at the Profession of Madame de la Valliere, June the 4th, 1675.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Memoirs relative to the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth inform us, that Madame de la Valliere was one of the principal ornaments of the French Court; and that neither vanity nor interest, but a real attachment, led her astray from the path of virtue. Reflection, however, frequently ruffled the current of pleasure, and the returning upbraidings of conscience urged her at length to withdraw from a scene where she acted so disreputable a part. The splendour of the court grew dim at the fall of so brilliant a star: it formed an epoch in the region of pleasure; and when Madame de la Valliere pronounced her monastic vows, all Versailles crowded into the church of the Carmelite Nuns at Paris.

In the following Discourse, the Bishop of Meaux does not waste his time in extolling the serious trifles and the rigorous follies which constitute the monastic state; but he dwells on the fallacy of human prosperity, and its unavailing power to secure happiness without the control of religion.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.—Rev. chap. xxi. v. 5.

HOW great, how sublime, how magnificent, will be that closing scene, when He who sits

on the throne, at whose bidding the universe arose; when He from that tremendous throne shall utter these words, " Behold, I make all things new;" at whose second intimation of his will, another world will arise, a new system of existence will be displayed, adapted to the happiness of the elect! Great and amazing as this new order of things will appear, there is a change, a novelty of another nature, which also claims our admiration. I mean that change, that miracle which God sometimes operates on the soul, by the impression of his Holy Spirit, which breathes upon the heart a purer air, and awakens a new train of desires and affections. To me there is nothing more wonderful than a change of this nature. What have we seen? And what do we now behold? How striking the contrast between the former situation and the present state! Words are not requisite for the occasion; the story tells itself.

Your Majesty beholds an object not unworthy of the presence of so virtuous a queen. You come not into this retreat accompanied by the splendours of the world: your own meek spirit solicits you to take an interest in the hu-

miliations of a life devoted to religious solitude. And it seems agreeable to the principle of justice, that your Majesty, who constitutes by your situation so considerable a part of worldly grandeur, should sometimes behold a ceremony, whose object is to bring worldly grandeur into contempt. This day's solemnity exhibits nothing that can engage the esteem of the world. The ornamented form has thrown off the livery of vanity, and the heart has undergone a still greater change ! And I, to celebrate these novelties, have been induced to break through a silence of many years, and raise once more a voice to which this temple has been long disused.

All you who are here assembled, more perhaps from the motive of curiosity, than the impulse of devotion, let me entreat you to turn from the object that is now before you, to inspect your own situation. Let the ambitious man here learn where ambition is contemptible, that the objects which are to him of such magnitude, are, in the eye of religion, the toys of folly. Let the vain woman recollect, that her unvaried attention to the display of her beauty, is dedicating her time to the idle purpose of setting off to advantage a perishable flower.

As the voice of the pilot cannot be heard in a storm, so the voice of grace, the silent invitations, the whispers of the Holy Spirit, cannot be attended to amidst the tumultuary occupations of the world. But there are intervals favourable to recollection. Should any female, undazzled by the splendours of exalted society, pause; should the wanderer through surrounding pleasures check for a few moments her progress; might she not commune with herself in this manner? Oh wealth! what art thou but a deceitful name? Oh pleasure! what art thou but an airy meteor? Thou didst promise to feed all the craving wishes of my heart. Oh vanity! that was wont to adorn my person with all thy treasures, what hast thou availed me? I will leave thy abode, and seek that habitation where virtue is the only ornament. The sinful form which luxury has pampered, shall recline on the hard unpillowed couch; and nocturnal psalmodies shall break my rest. That liberty of which I have made so licentious an abuse, I will place under the severest restraint: within imprisoning grates and sullen cloisters shall that liberty be con-

finer. Thus circumstanced, thus enclosed on every side, I shall be able to lift my thoughts only to Heaven: and may I then become a victim, ah! more than a victim, a prey to love!

Let me now ask this audience, if the holy truths I have offered to your attention, have excited in your bosom a glow of virtue? Does not rather a life so detached from pleasure and indulgence of every kind, appear to you a chimerical existence? But you will be told from yonder *tribune* *, that such a life is practicable. Can a life of uncontrolled indulgence only be expiated by such unrelenting austerities? You will be told from yonder *tribune*, that a merciful God changes penitential austerity into pleasure: as the sun-beam melts the fullen ice-bound river into a cheerful stream. But can we live in the world, and comply with the demands of virtue? Undoubtedly you may. You will inevitably meet with many disappointments, mortifying incidents, and calamities; all which if you bear with a patient and submissive heart, you

* Which was occupied by the Queen and Madame de la Valliere.

perform your task; and virtue asks no more. The perfidy of friendship, the inconstancy of favour, the torture of neglect, the loss of children, sickness, dejection, and mental pain; these are the austerities the world imposes on its followers, which transcend the voluntary austerities that form the habitual employment of this mansion.

O Holy Spirit! may my voice be like the rushing sound, which once preceded thy descent! Thou source of uncreated light, descend! pregnant of wisdom, and effusive of grace!

You, to whose sanctification this day is solemnized, votary of penitence, go and complete your sacrifice. The fire is kindled, the incense is prepared, the altar is decorated, the ministers attend, and nothing is wanting but the victim. Go, and receive from that venerable prelate, the mysterious veil: envelope yourself in its sacred folds, and, concealed from the world, enjoy that peace which the world cannot give. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you evermore.



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